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Pamichev et al.

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(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR
PERFORMING ARTHROSCOPIC
MICROFRACTURE SURGERY**

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(2013.01); A61B 2017/320032 (2013.01);
A61B 2017/922 (2013.01)

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(US)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC A61B 17/1615; A61B 17/1617; A61B
17/1631

See application file for complete search history.

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U.S.C. 154(b) by 206 days.

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May 8, 2009, now Pat. No. 8,409,230.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/126,911, filed on May
8, 2008.

(51) **Int. Cl.**

A61B 17/16 (2006.01)

A61B 17/32 (2006.01)

A61B 17/92 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **A61B 17/1604** (2013.01); **A61B 17/1631**
(2013.01); **A61B 17/1615** (2013.01); **A61B**

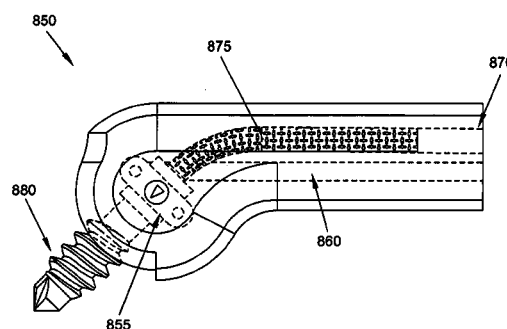
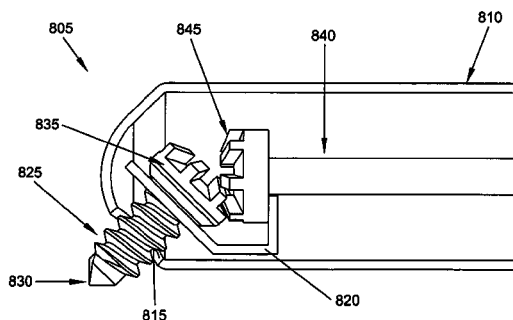
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A microfracture instrument for applying microfracture
therapy to a bone, the microfracture instrument comprising:
an elongated shaft comprising a distal end and a proximal
end;

a needle comprising a body terminating in at least one
sharp point, the needle being movably mounted to the
distal end of the shaft for movement between an
extended position for engaging the bone with the at
least one sharp point of the needle and a retracted
position for withdrawing the at least one sharp point of
the needle from the bone; and

a drive shaft movably mounted to the elongated shaft, the
drive shaft being connected to the body of the needle so
that movement of the drive shaft relative to the elon-
gated shaft moves the needle between its extended
position and its retracted position.

4 Claims, 35 Drawing Sheets



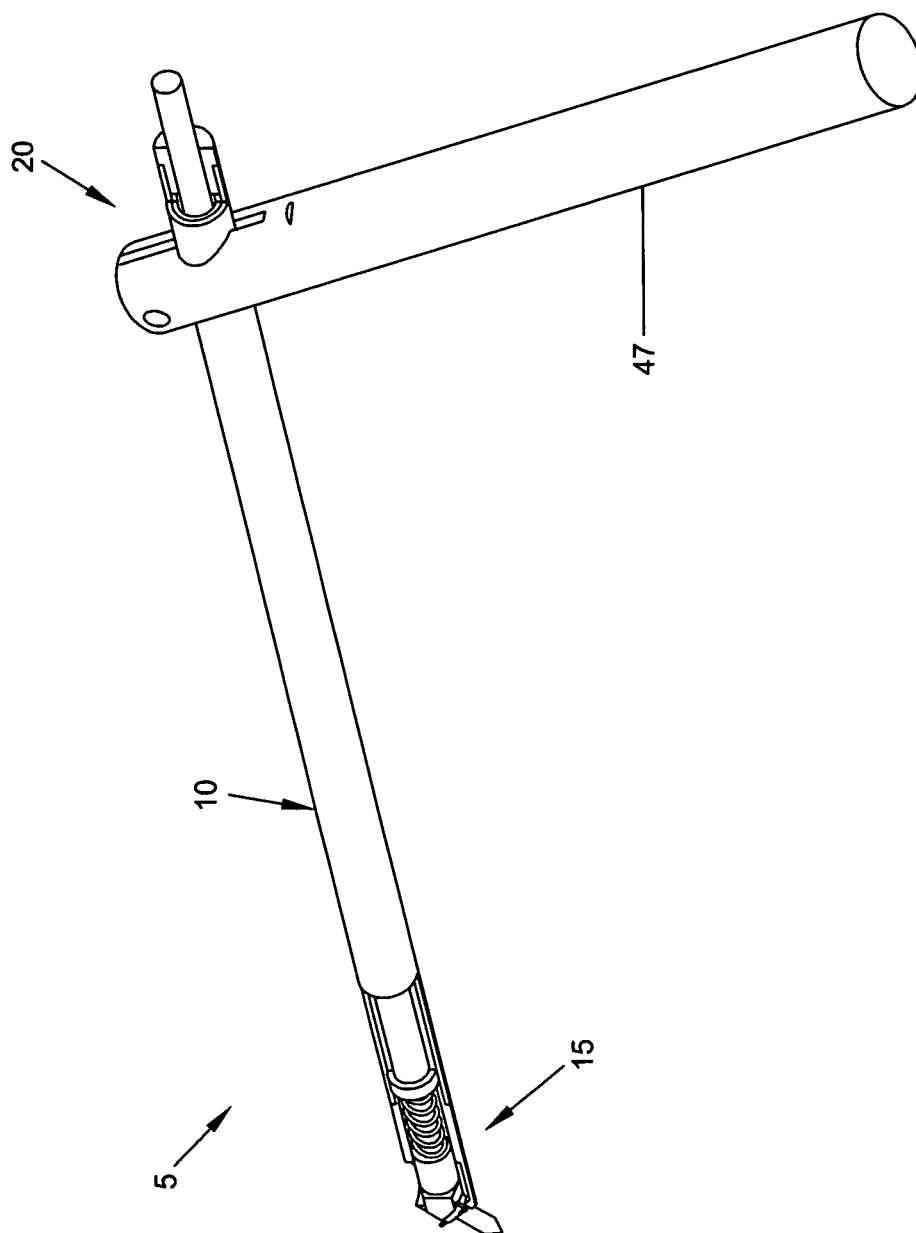


FIG. 1

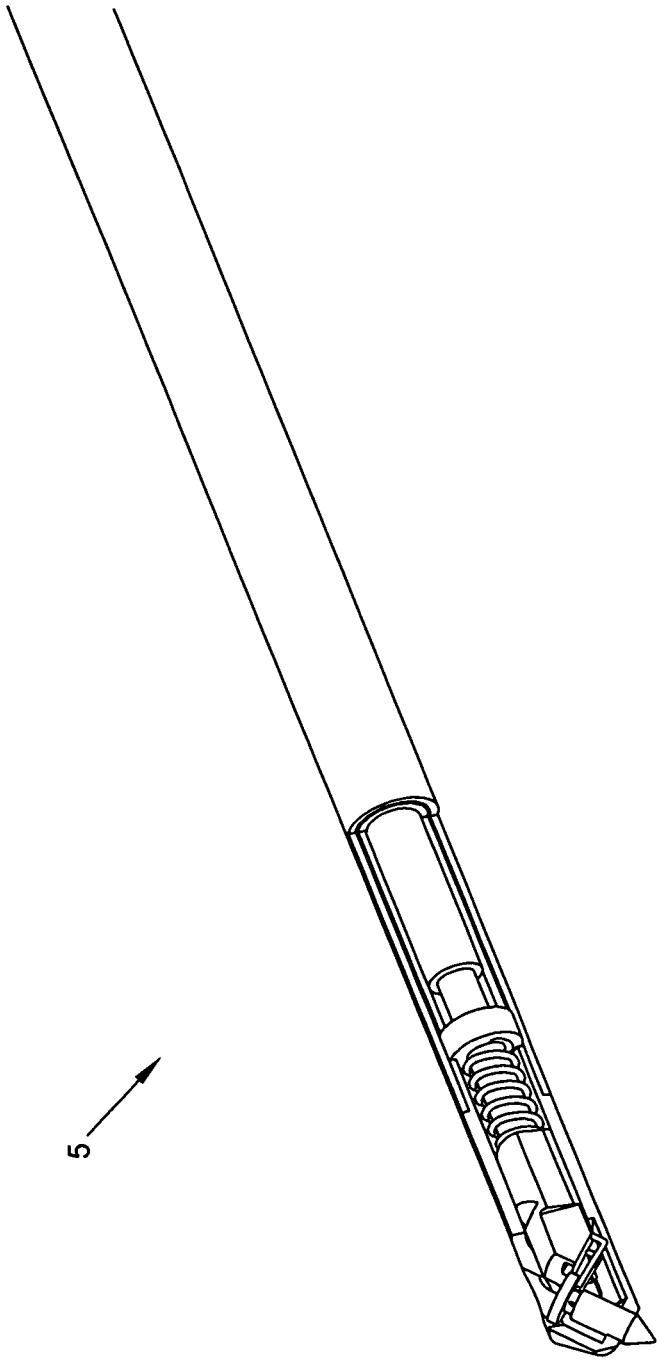


FIG. 2

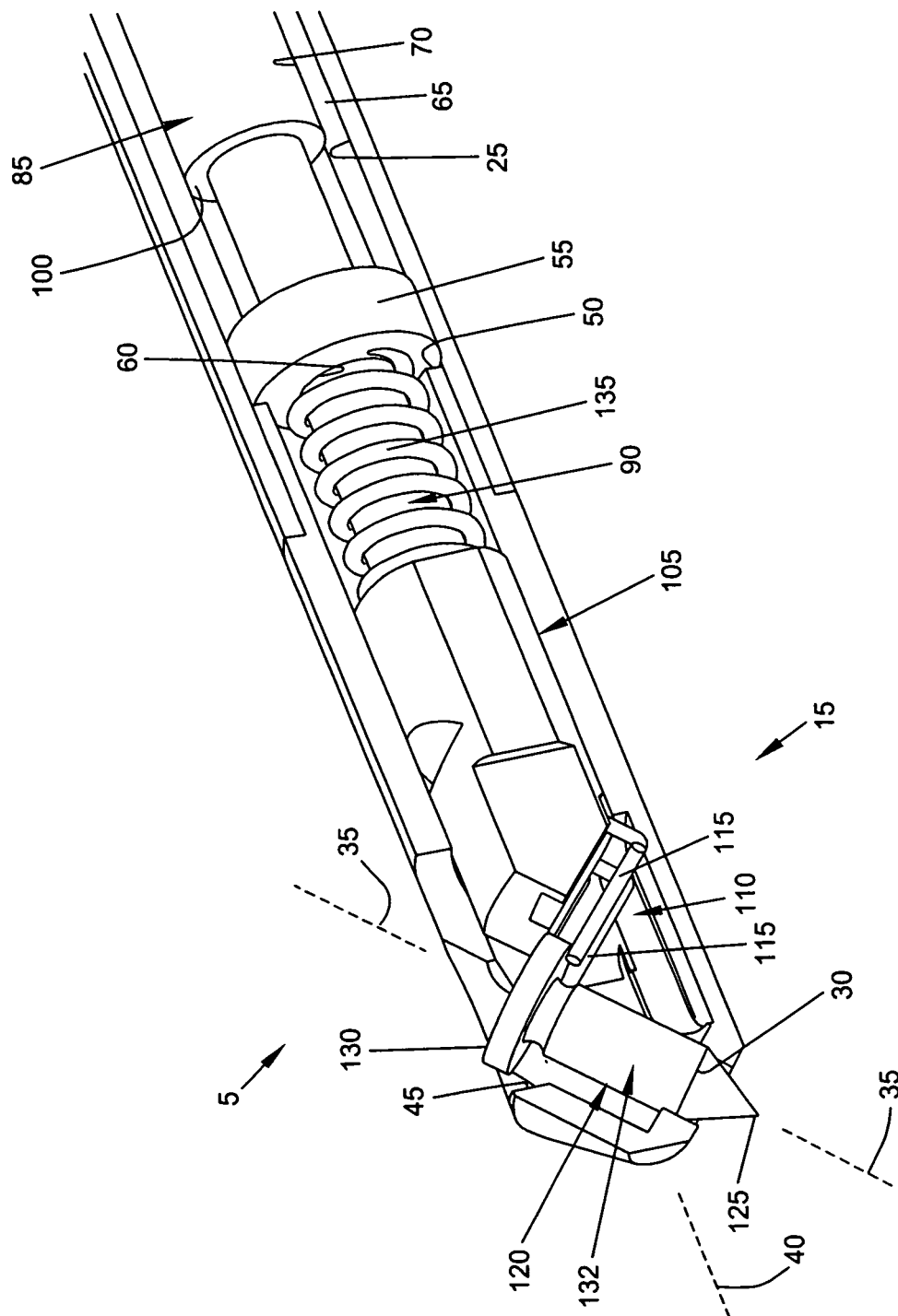


FIG. 3

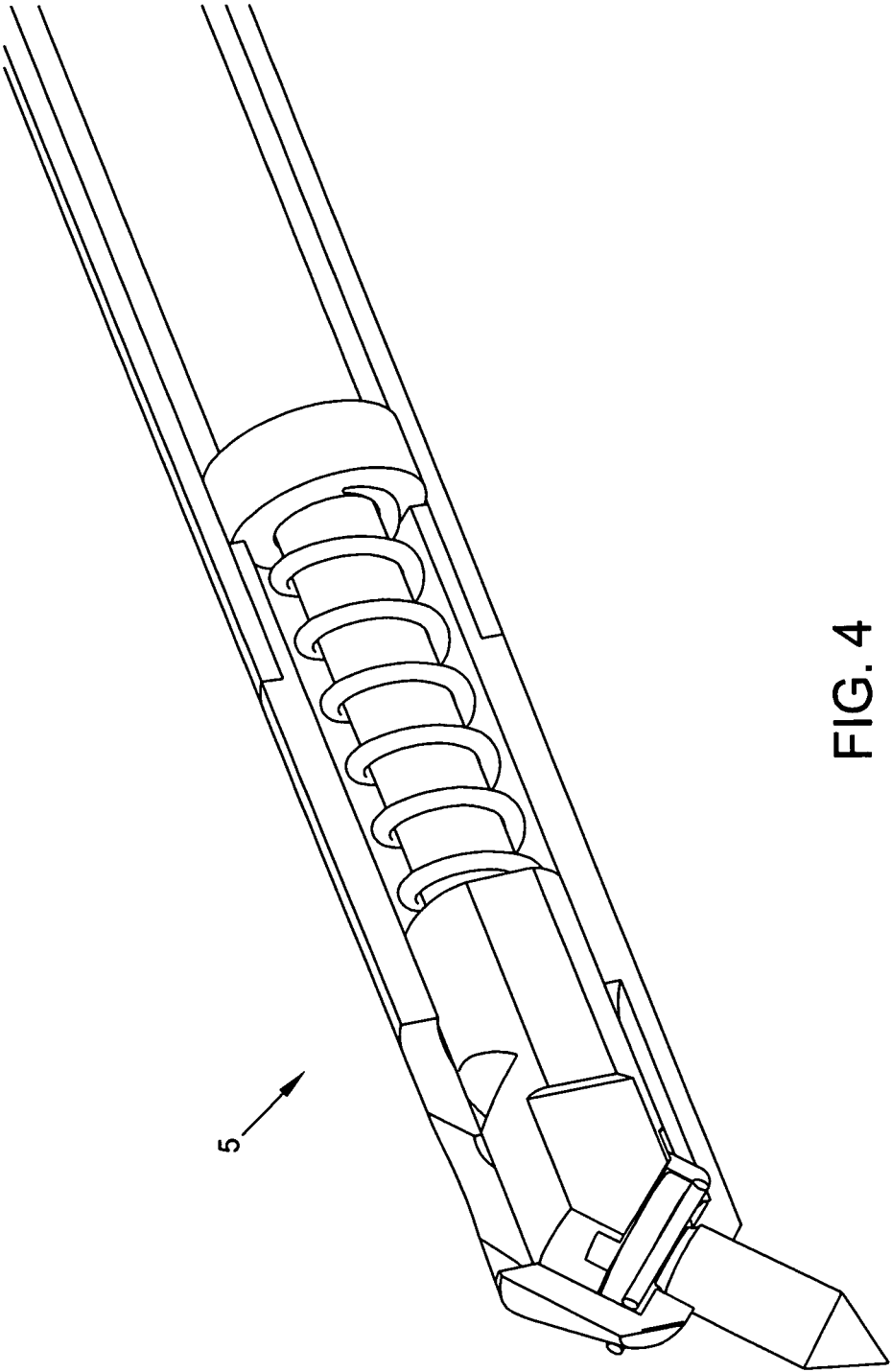


FIG. 4

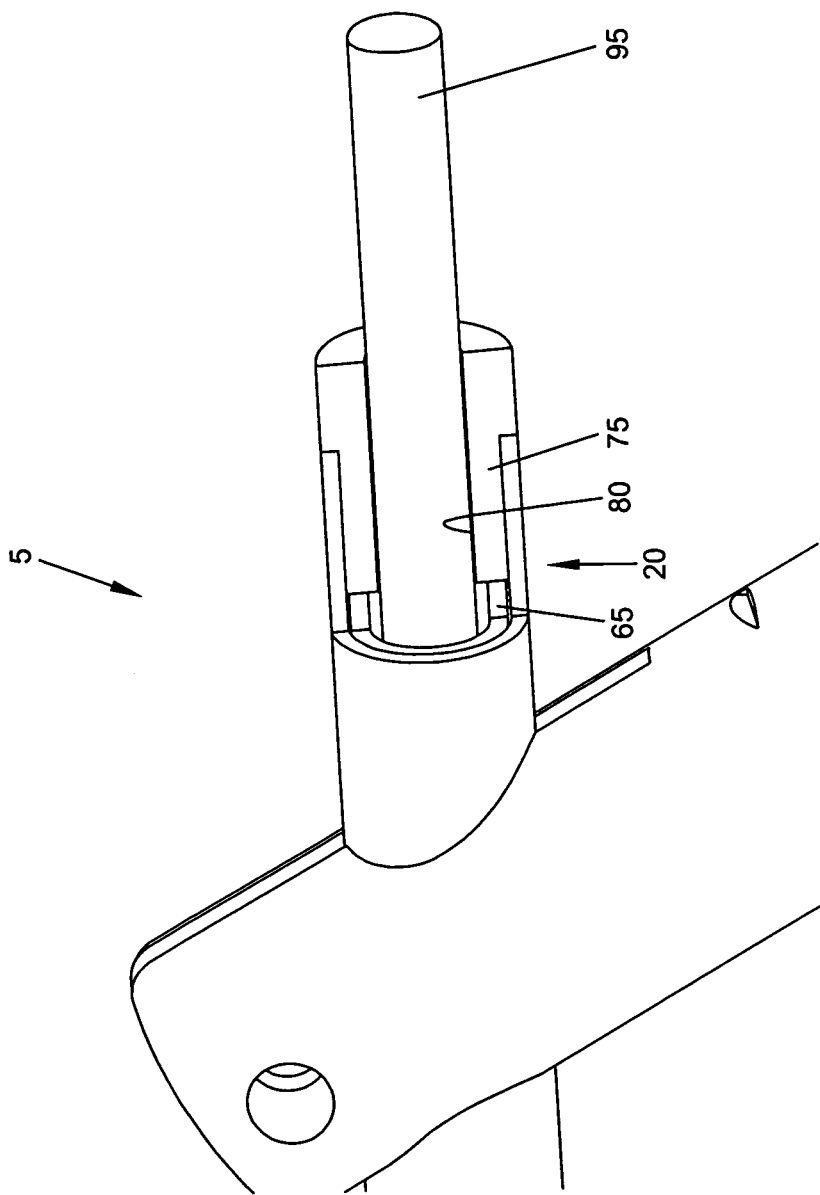


FIG. 5

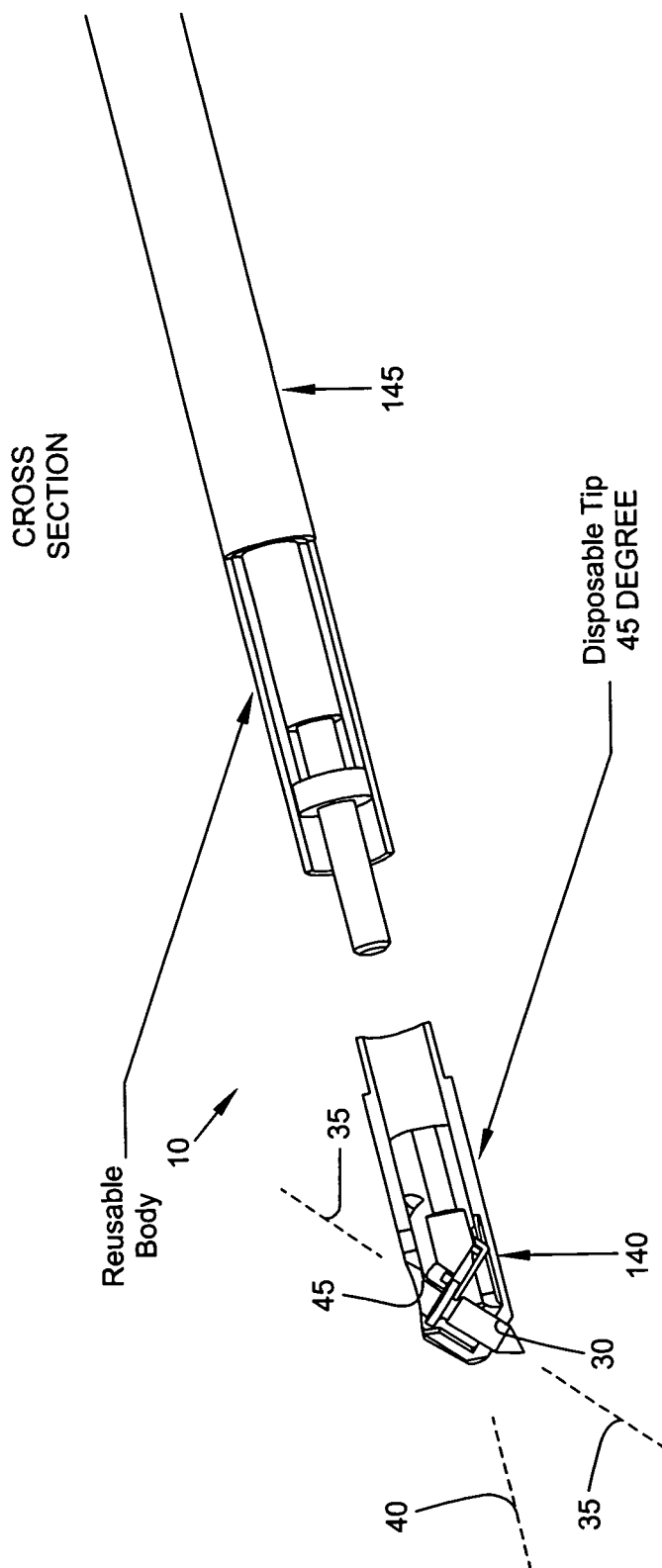


FIG. 6

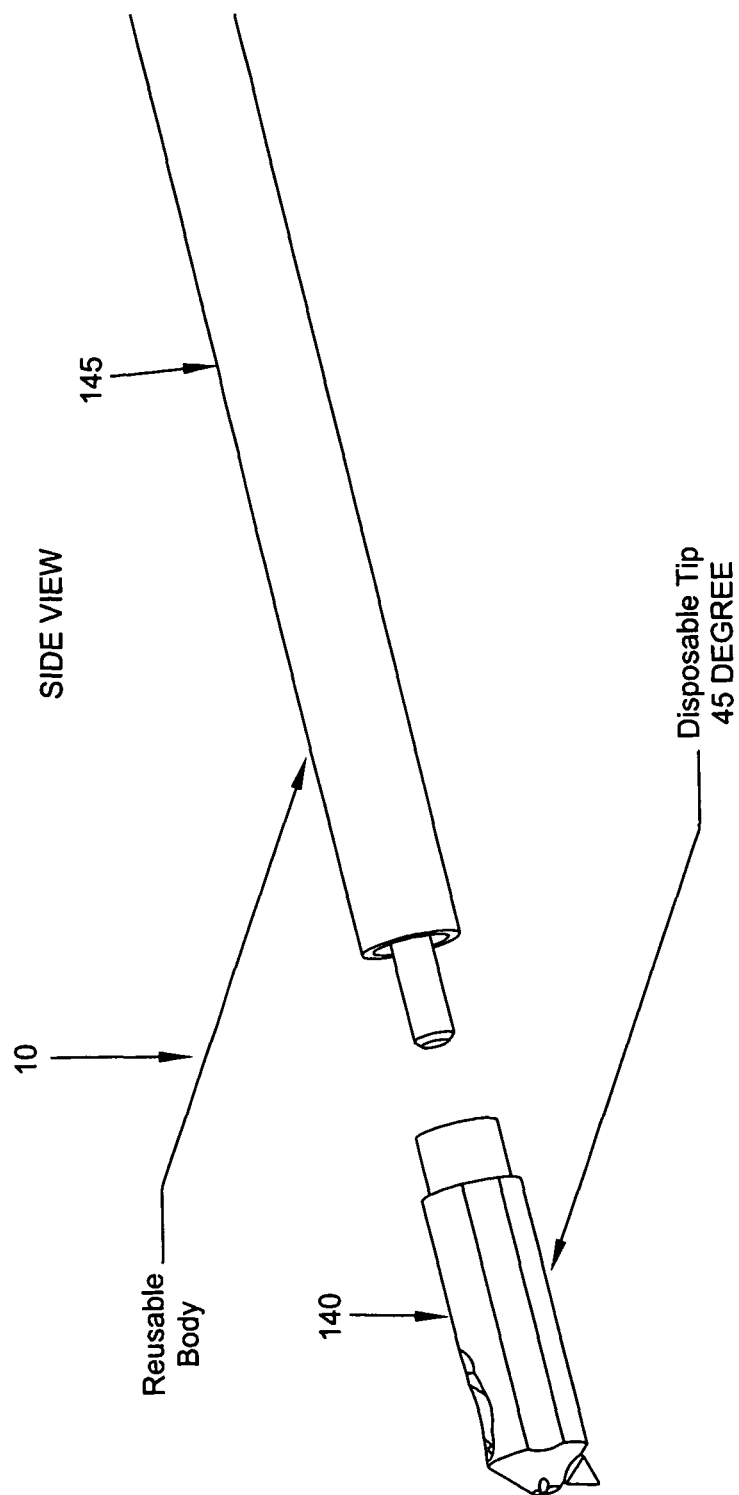


FIG. 7

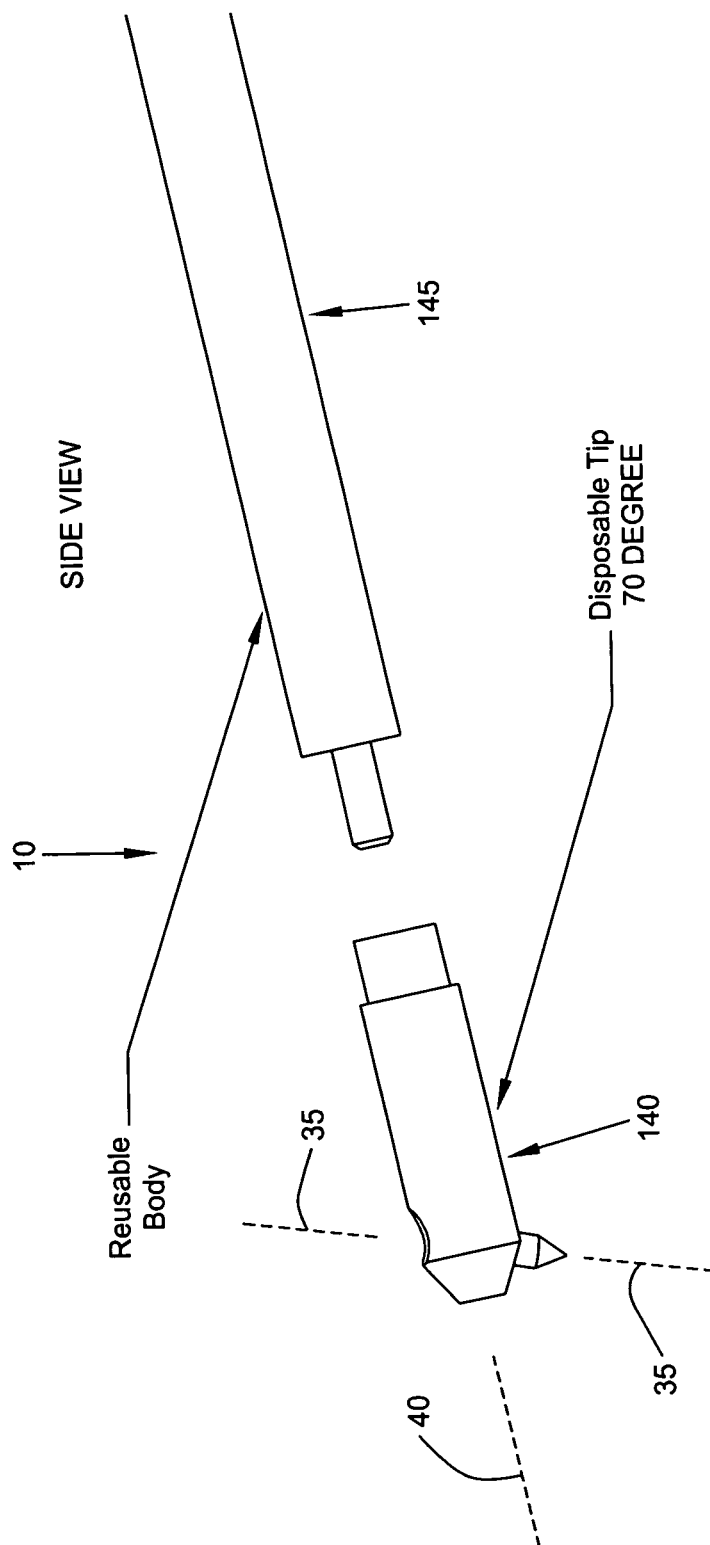


FIG. 8

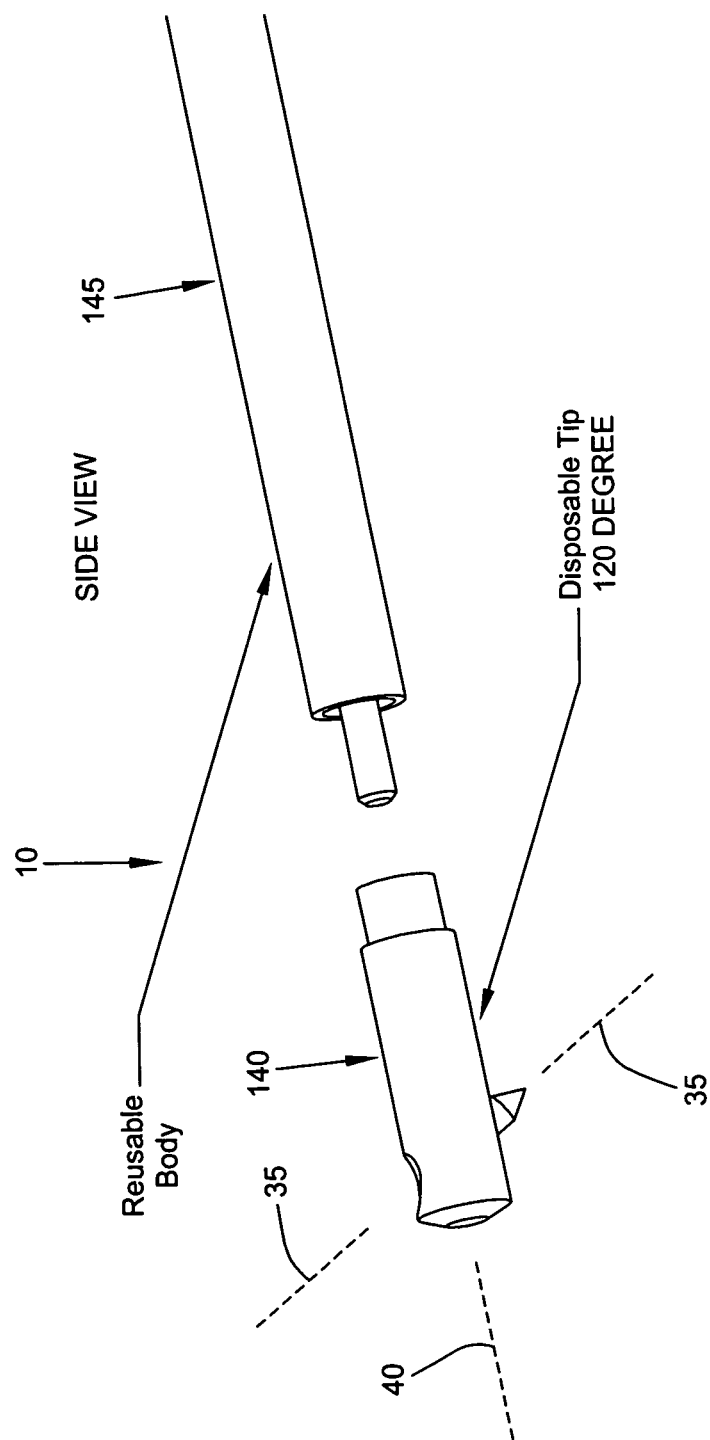
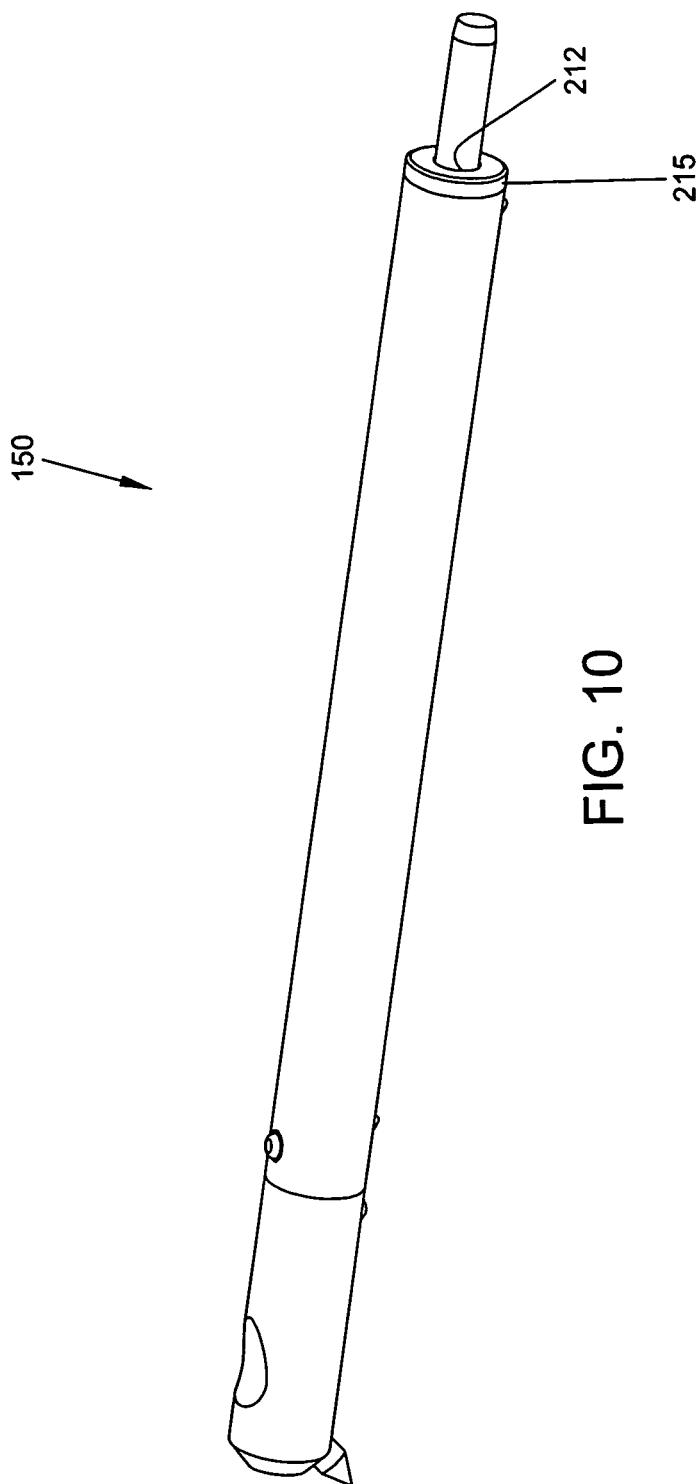


FIG. 9



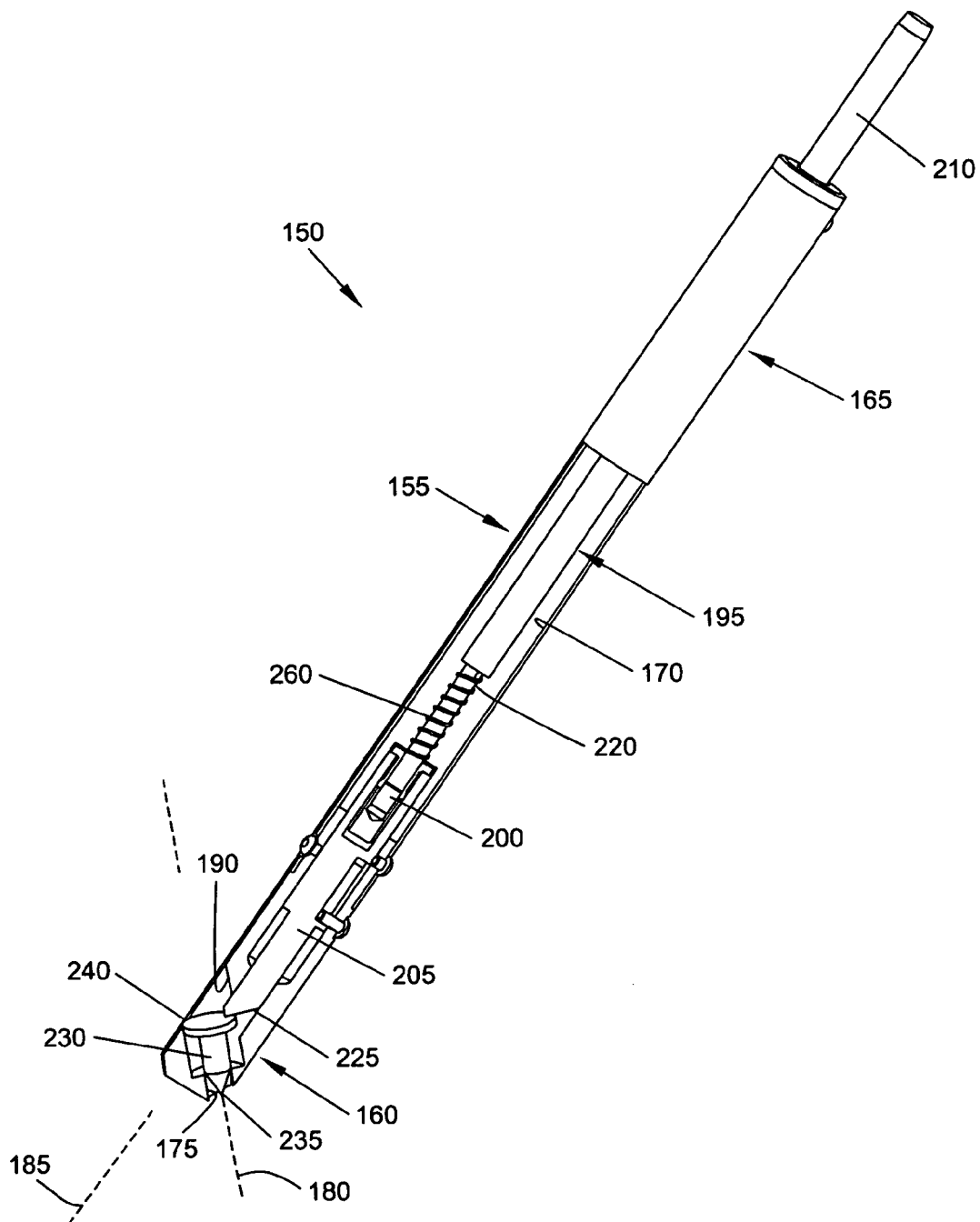


FIG. 11

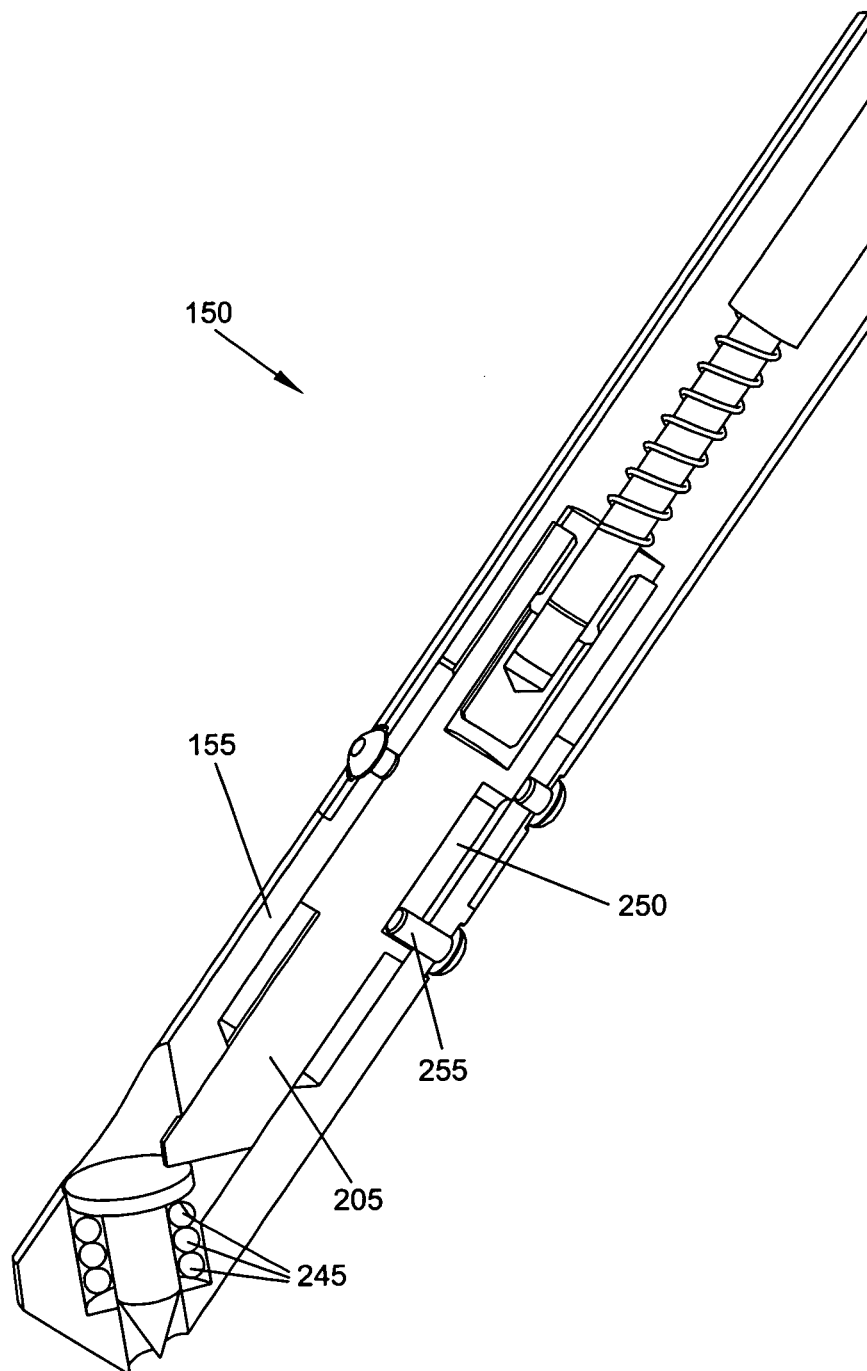


FIG. 12

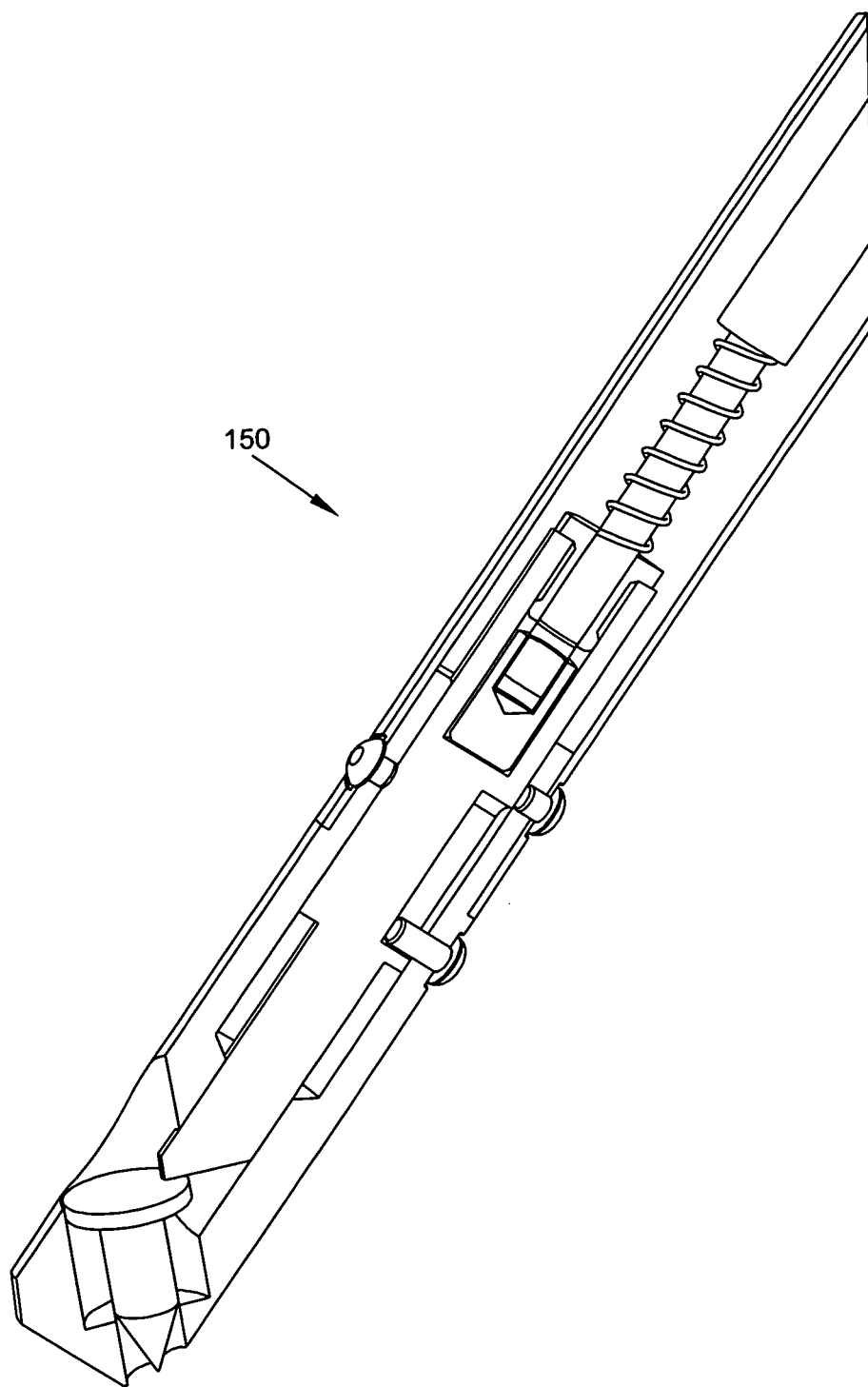


FIG. 13

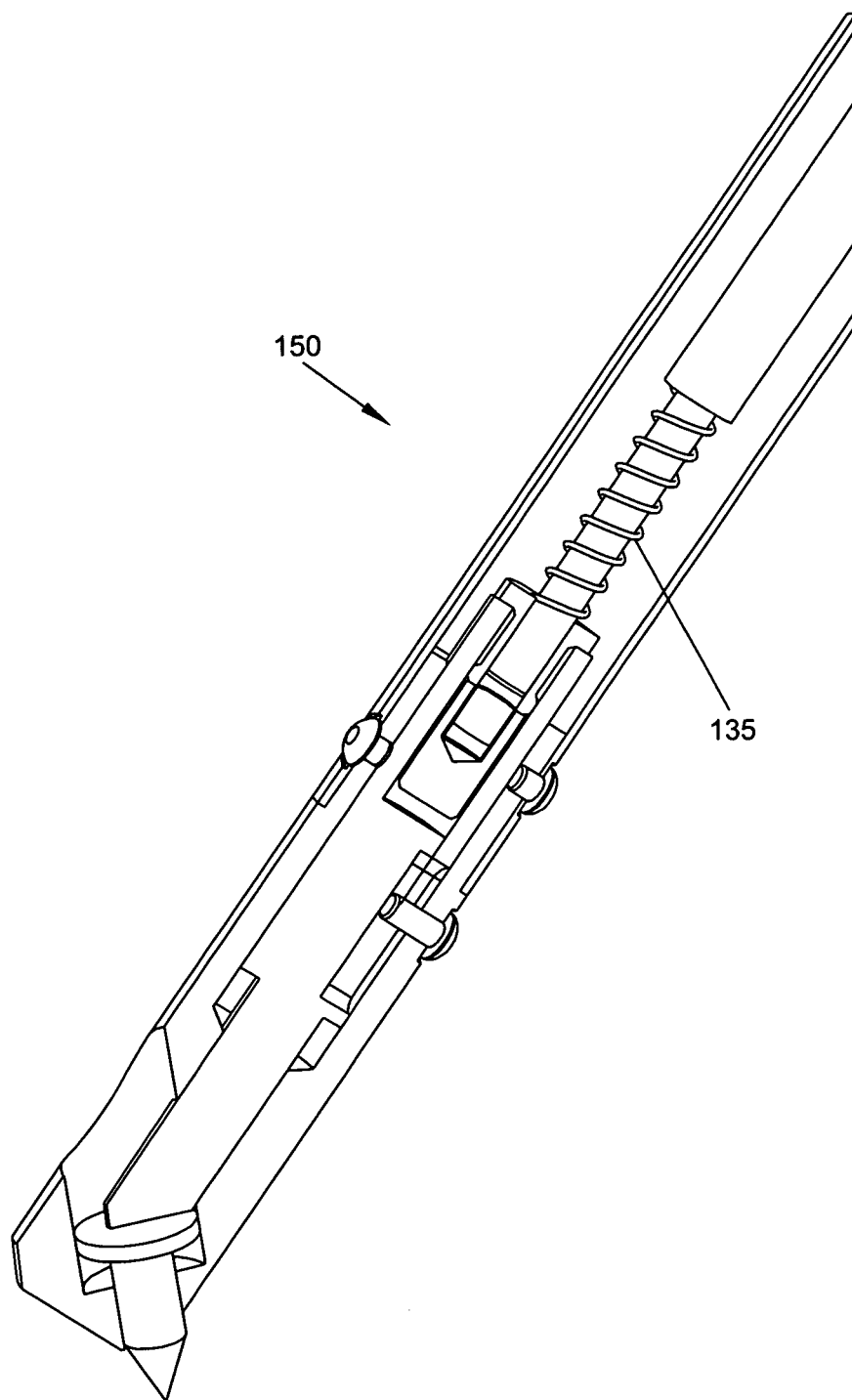


FIG. 14

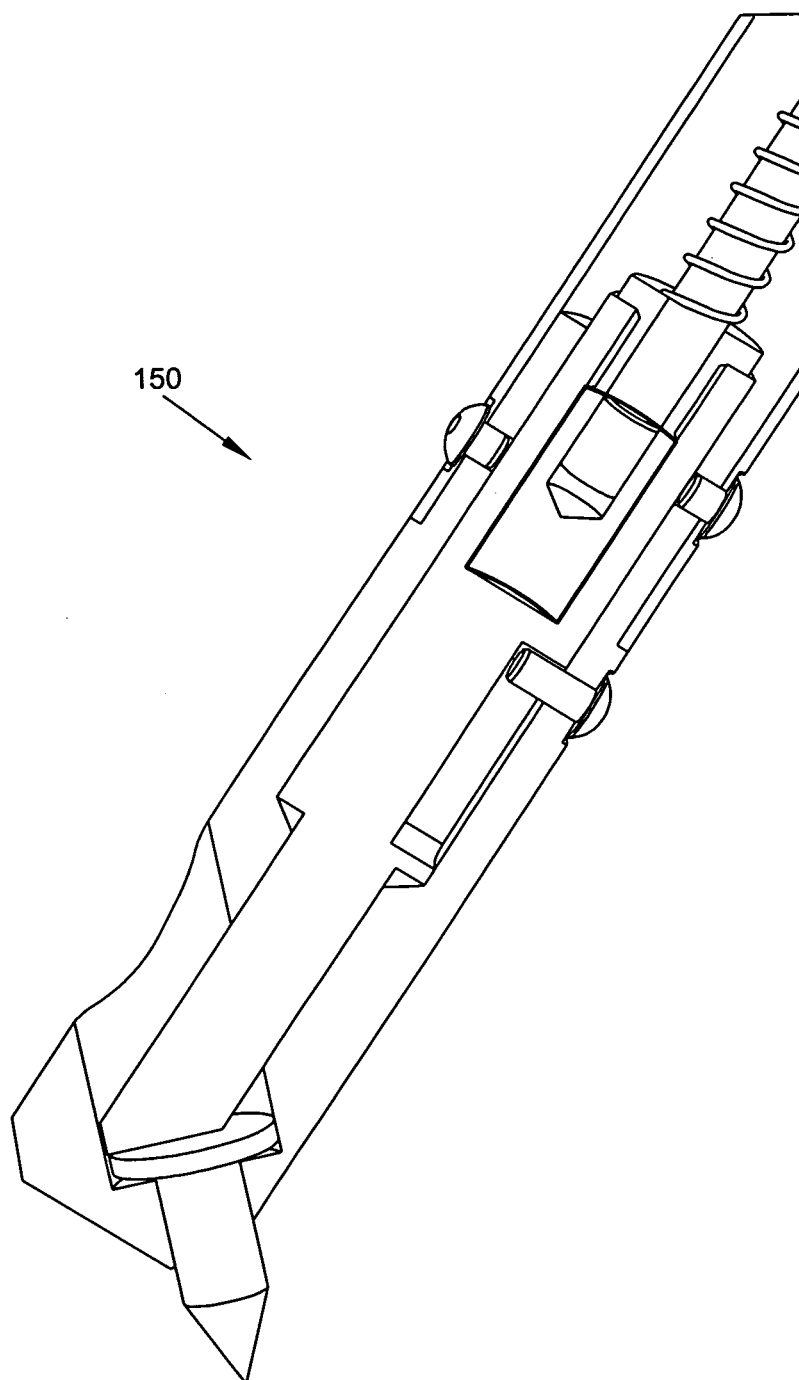
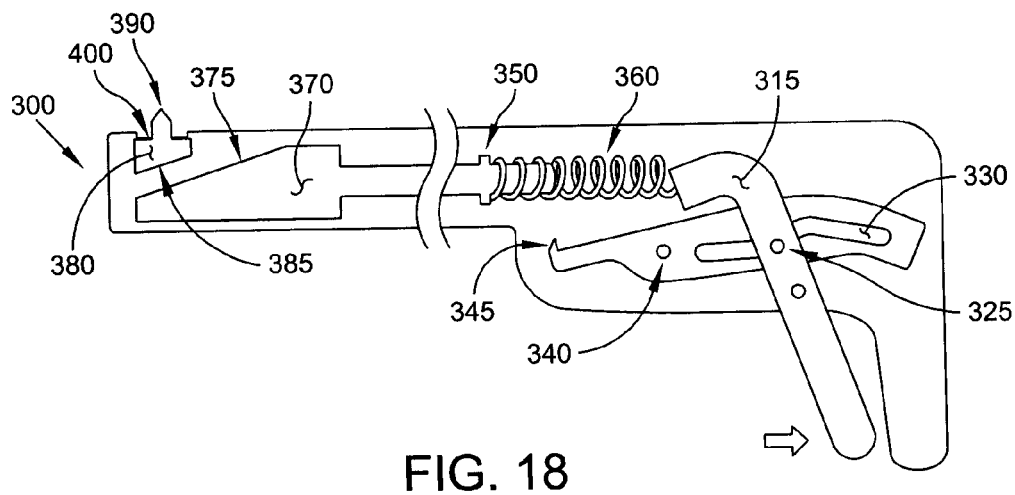
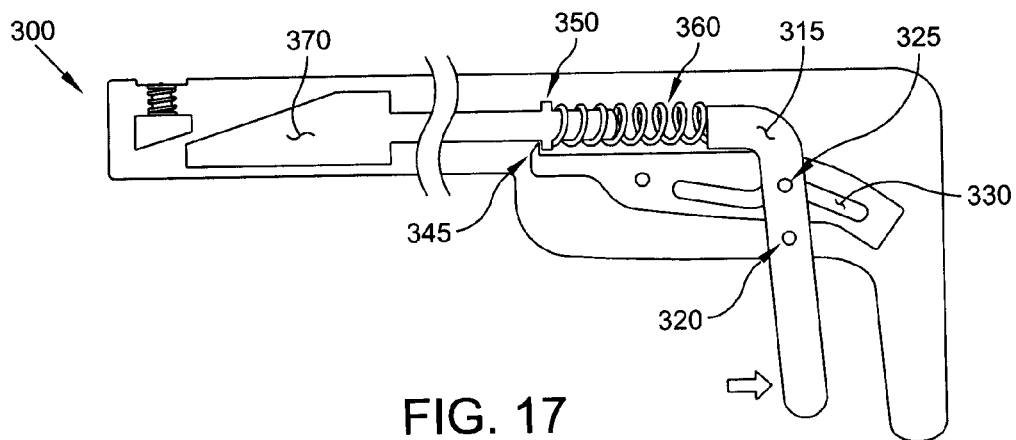
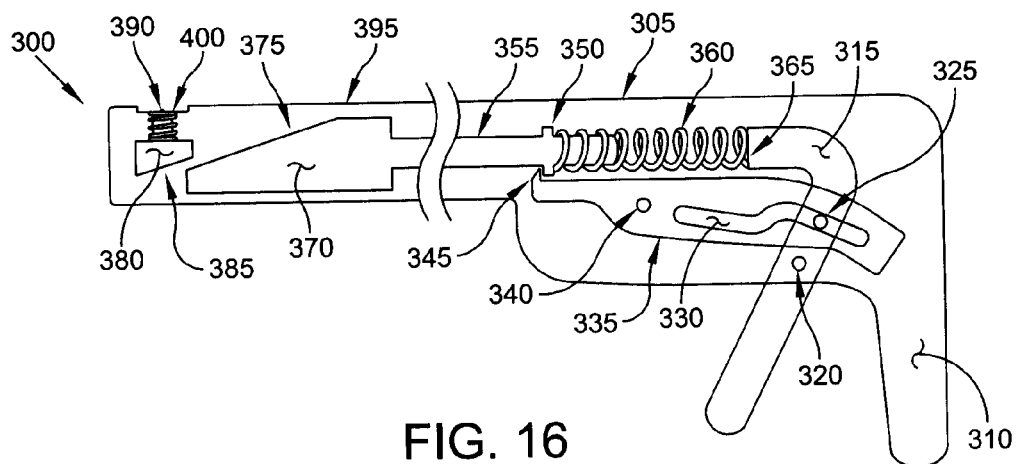
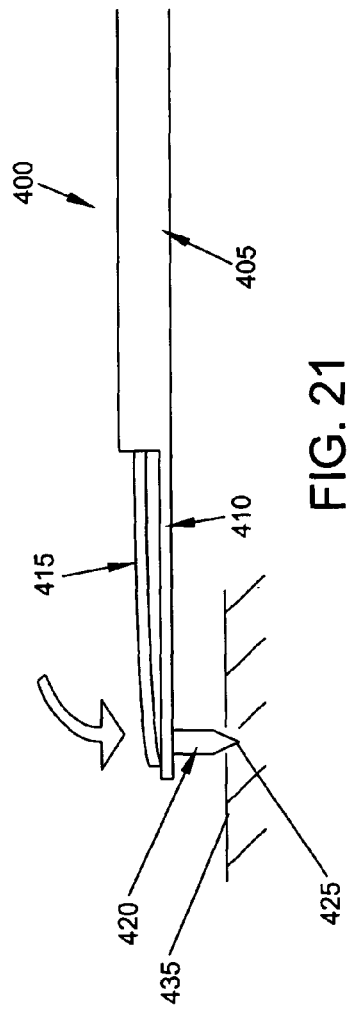
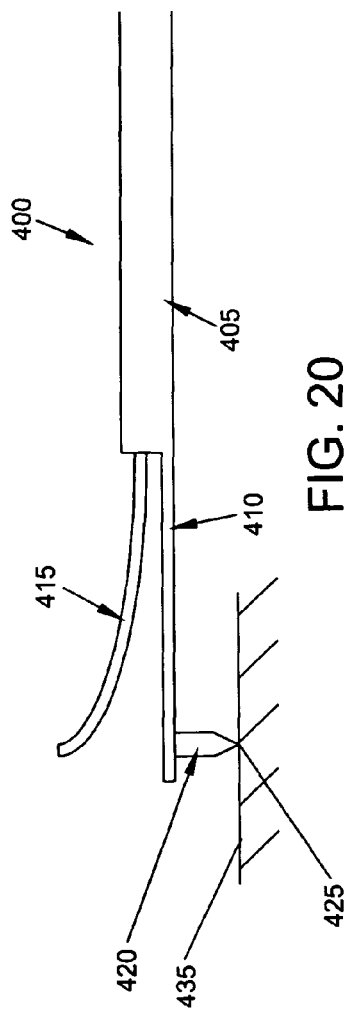
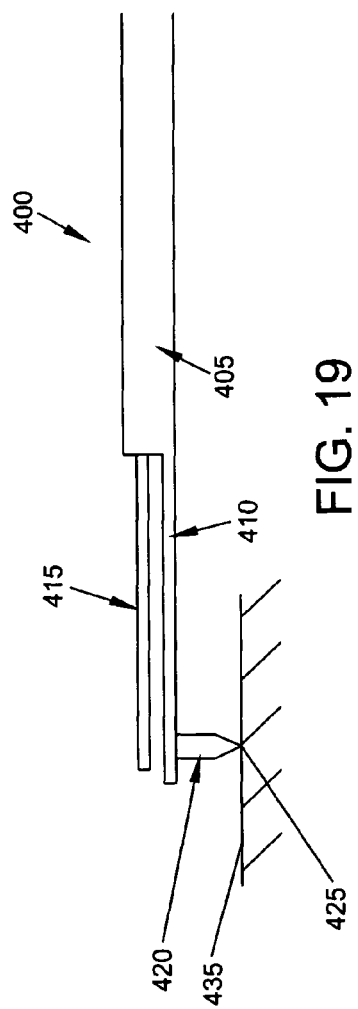
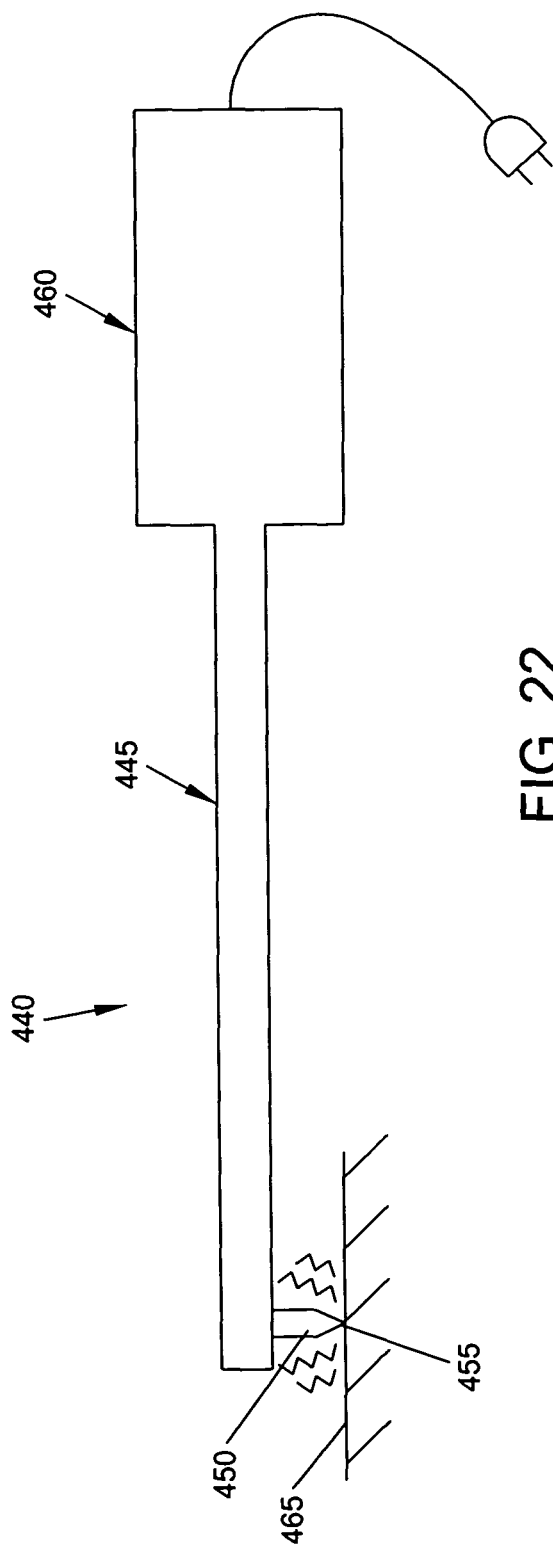


FIG. 15







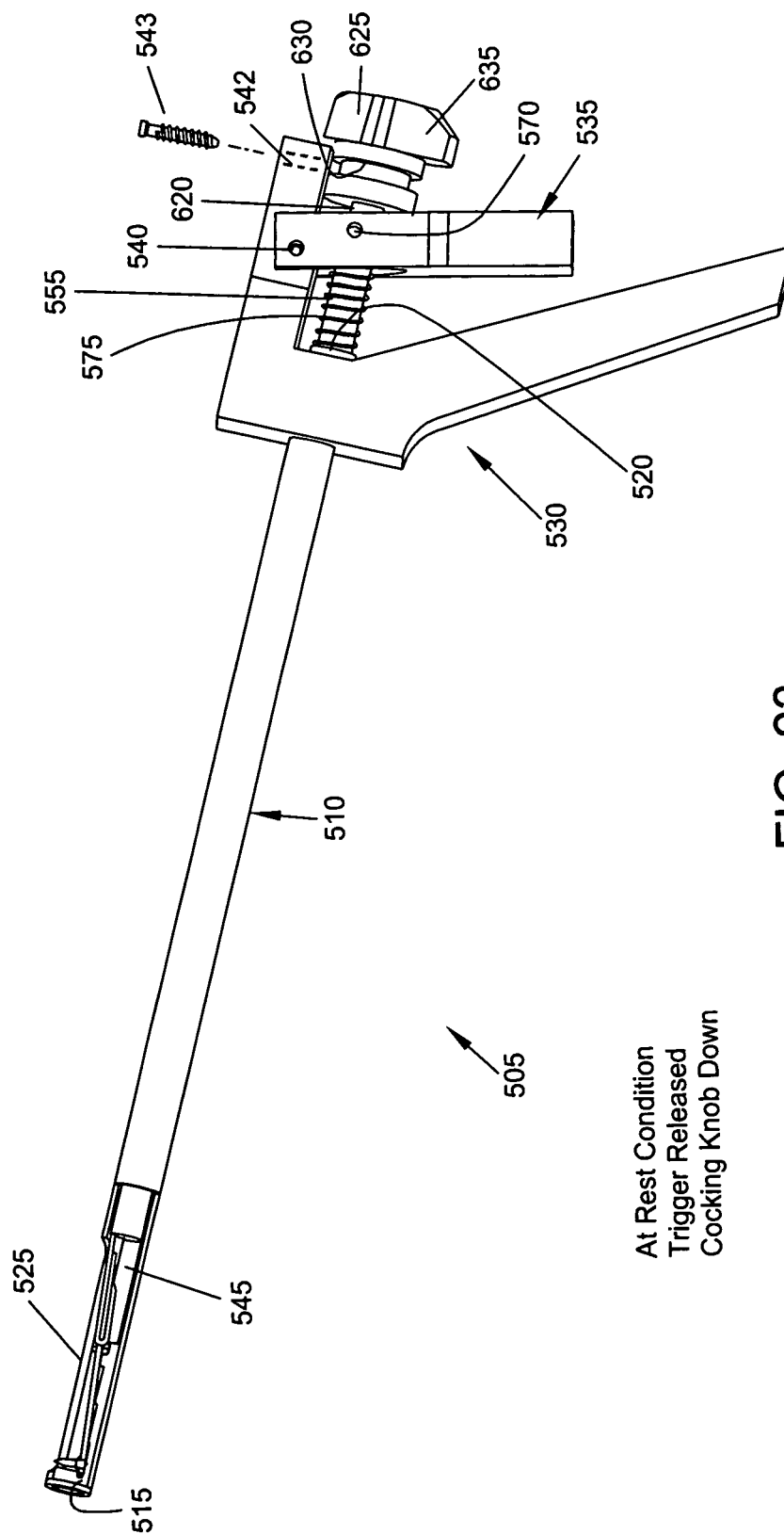


FIG. 23

**At Rest Condition
Trigger Released
Cocking Knob Down**

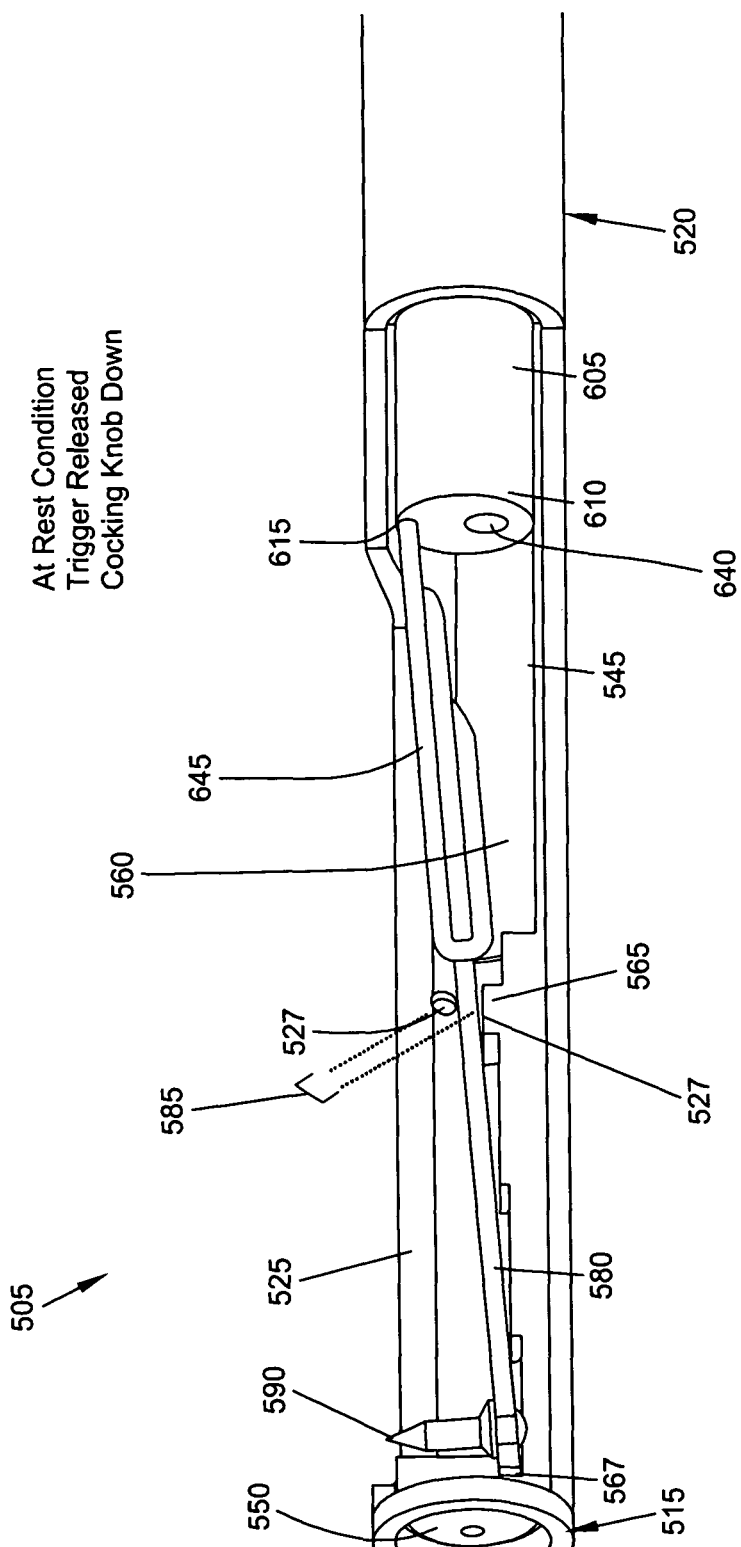
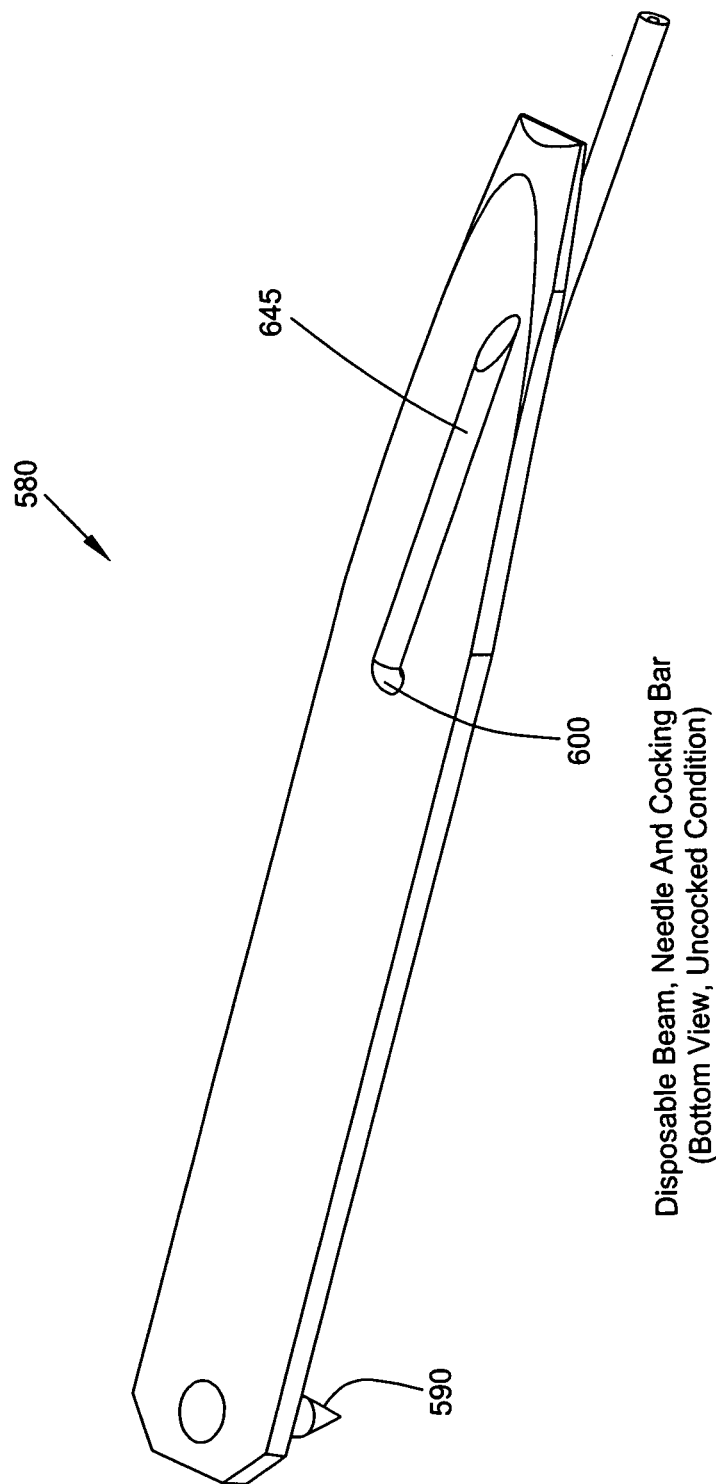
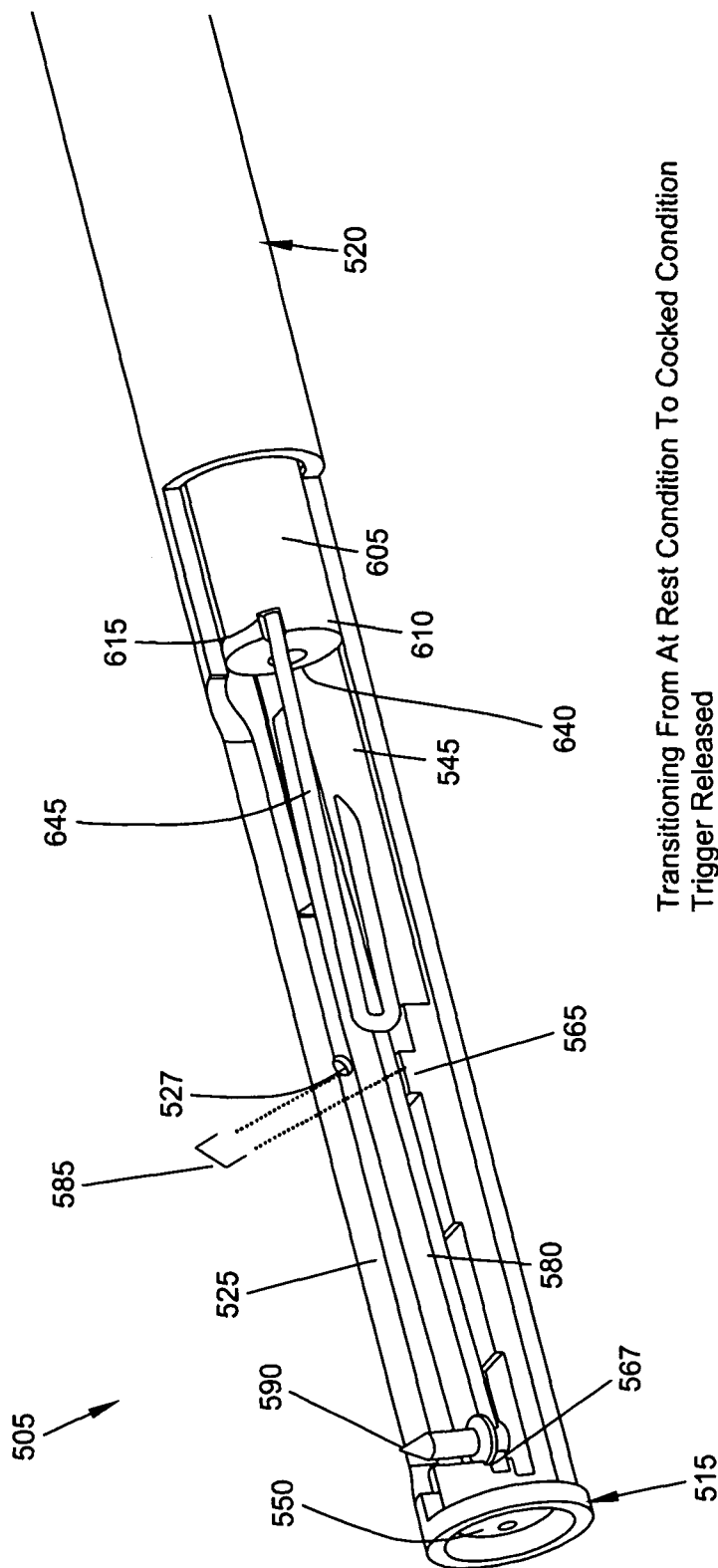


FIG. 24



Disposable Beam, Needle And Cocking Bar
(Bottom View, Uncocked Condition)

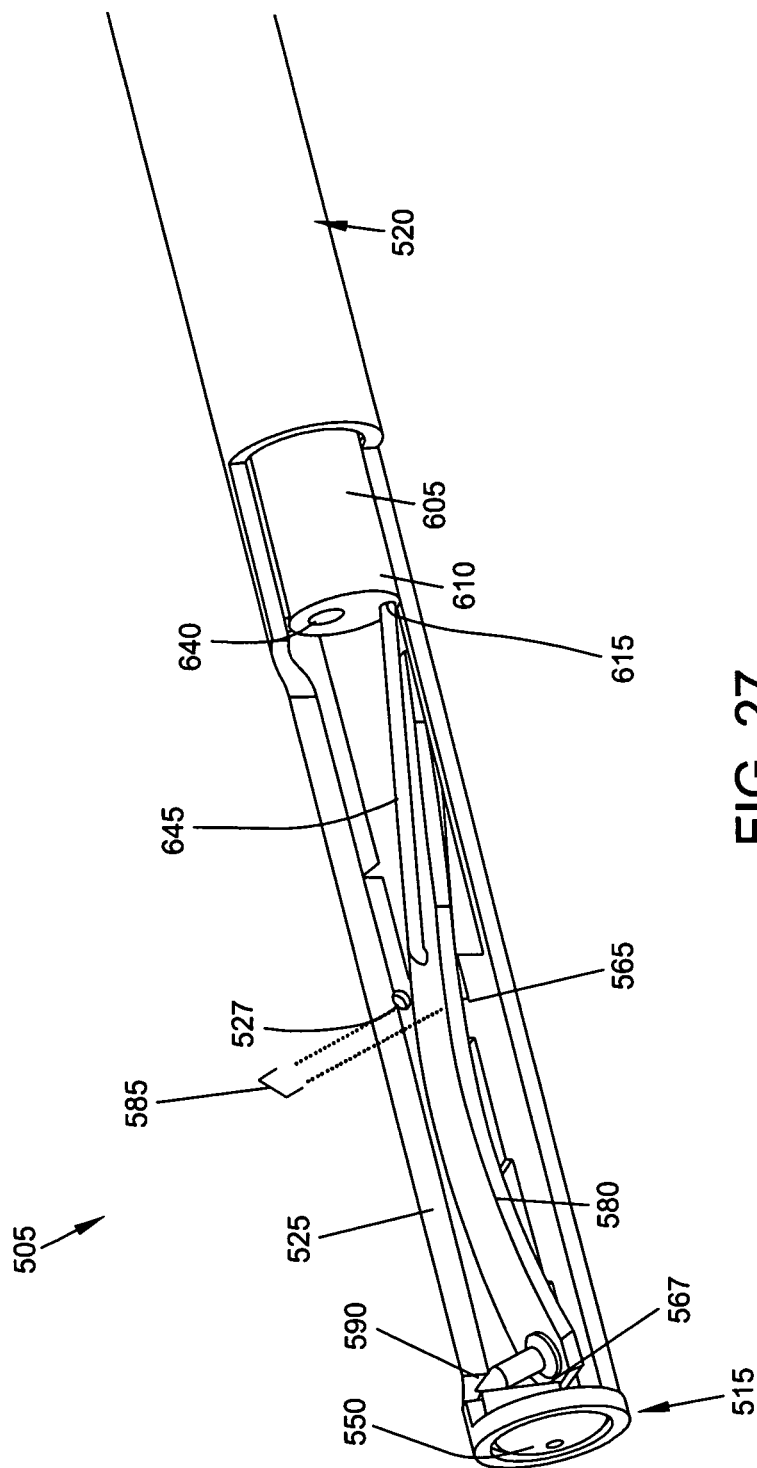
FIG. 25

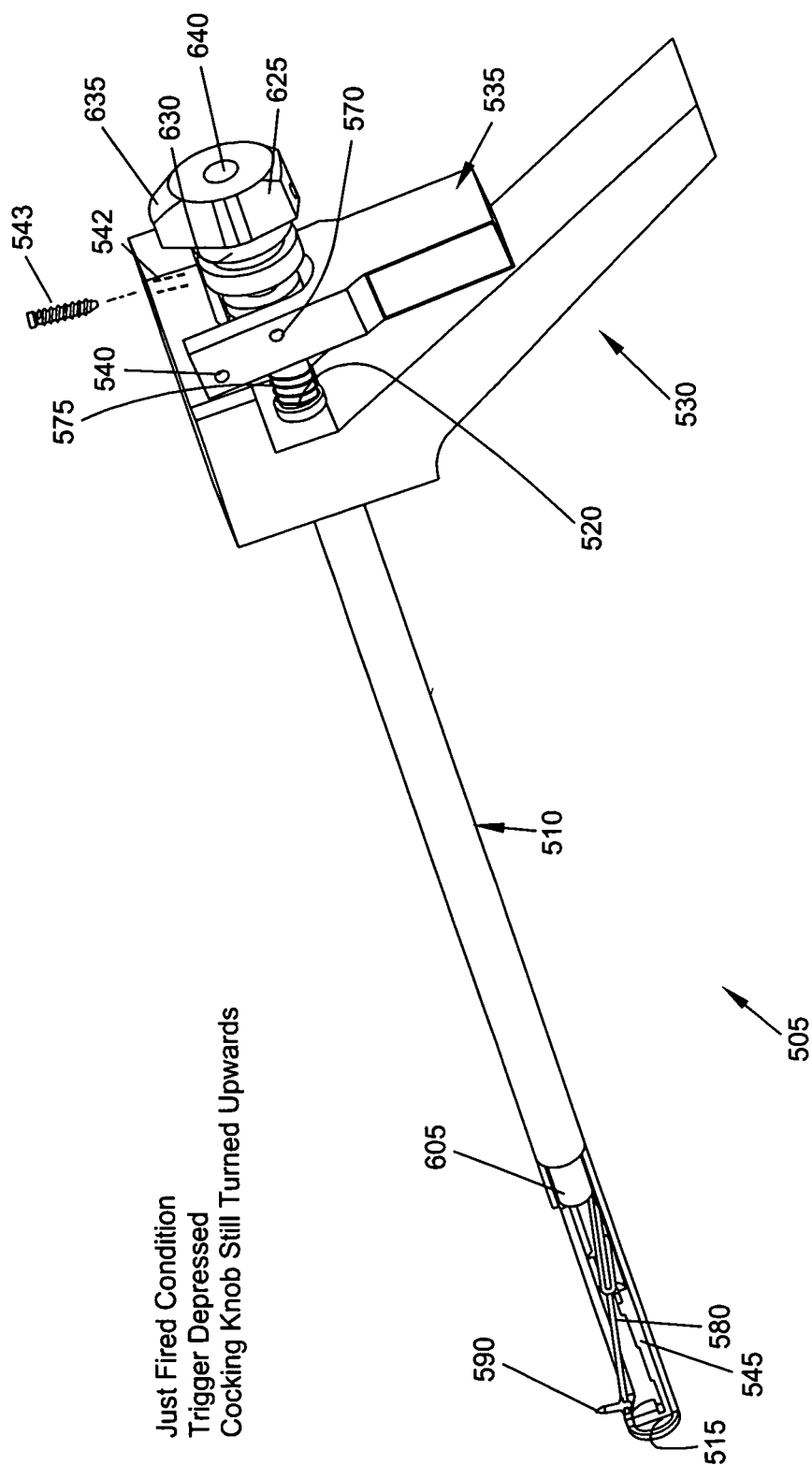


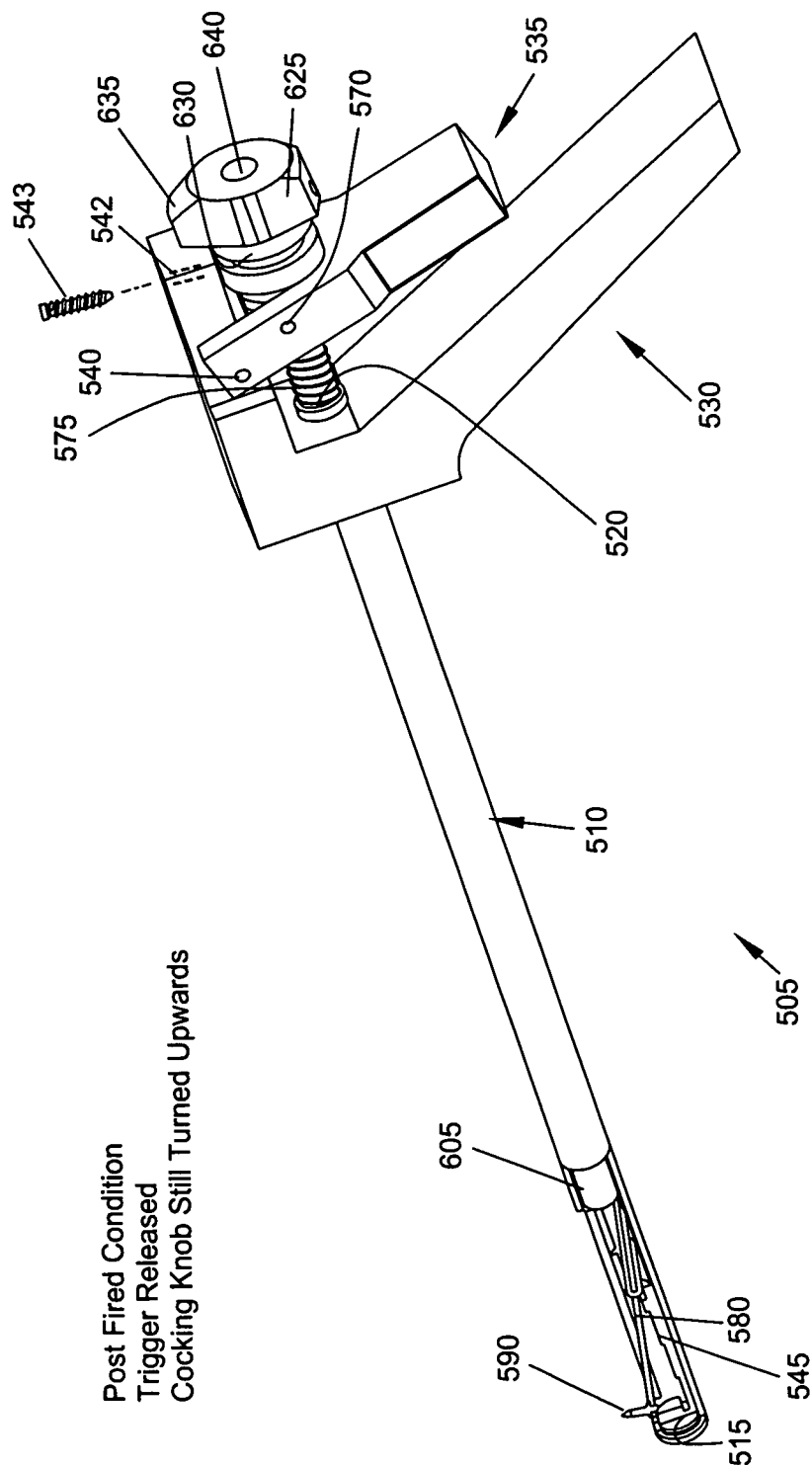
Transitioning From At Rest Condition To Cocked Condition
Trigger Released
Cocking Knob Starting To Turn Upward

FIG. 26

Fully Cocked Condition
Trigger Released
Cocking Knob Turned Upward







Post Fired Condition Trigger Released Cocking Knob Still Turned Upwards

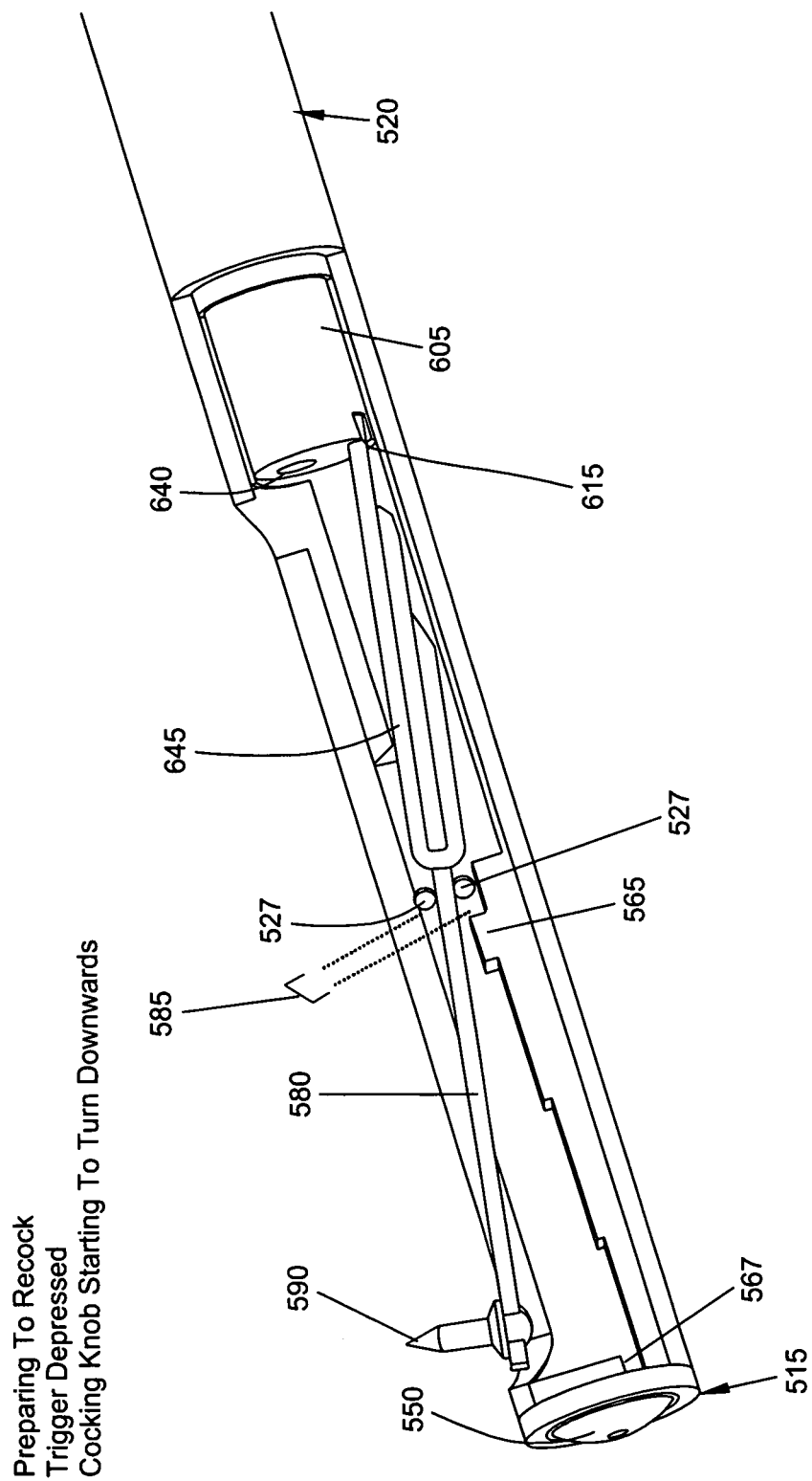


FIG. 30

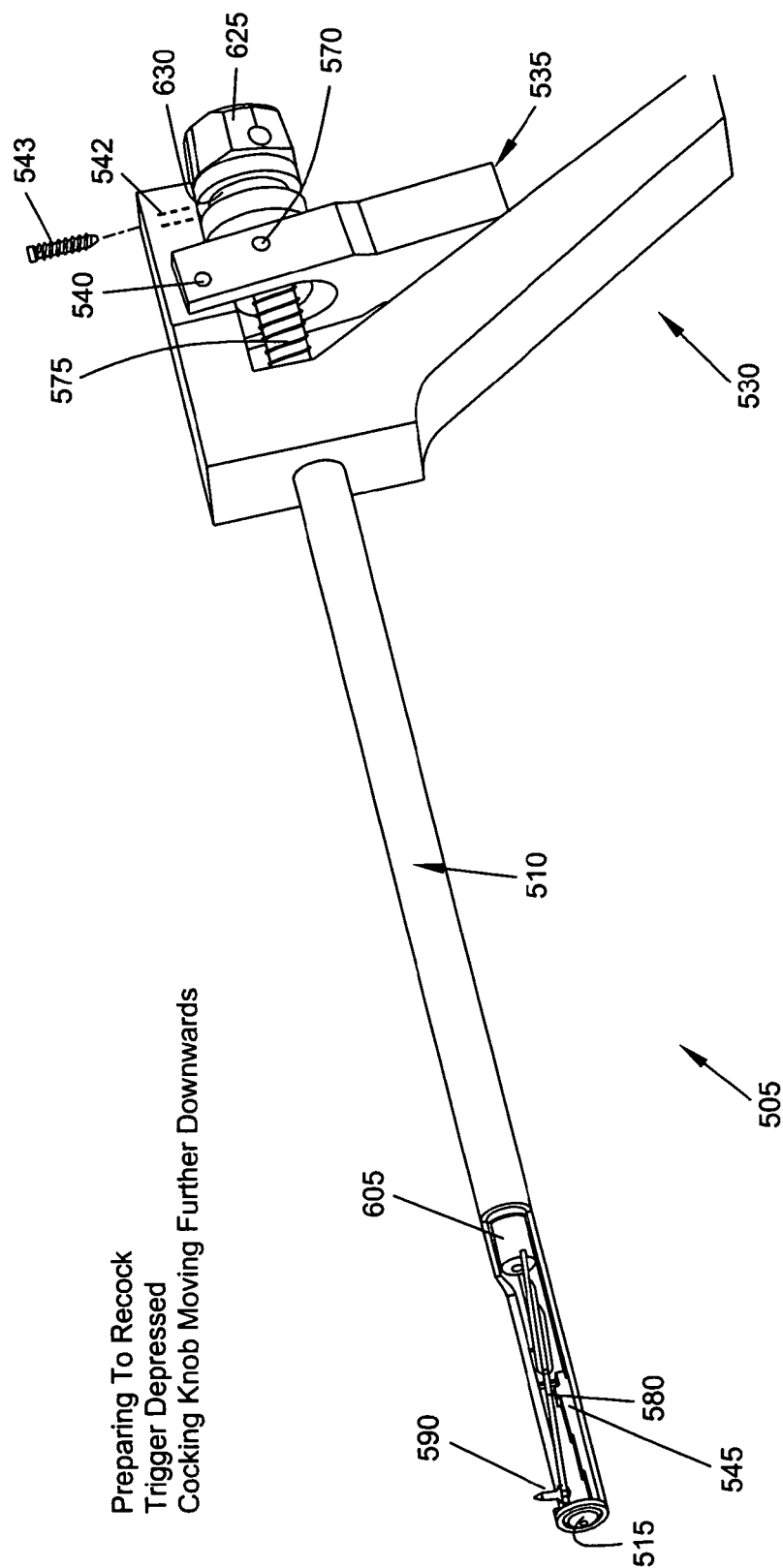
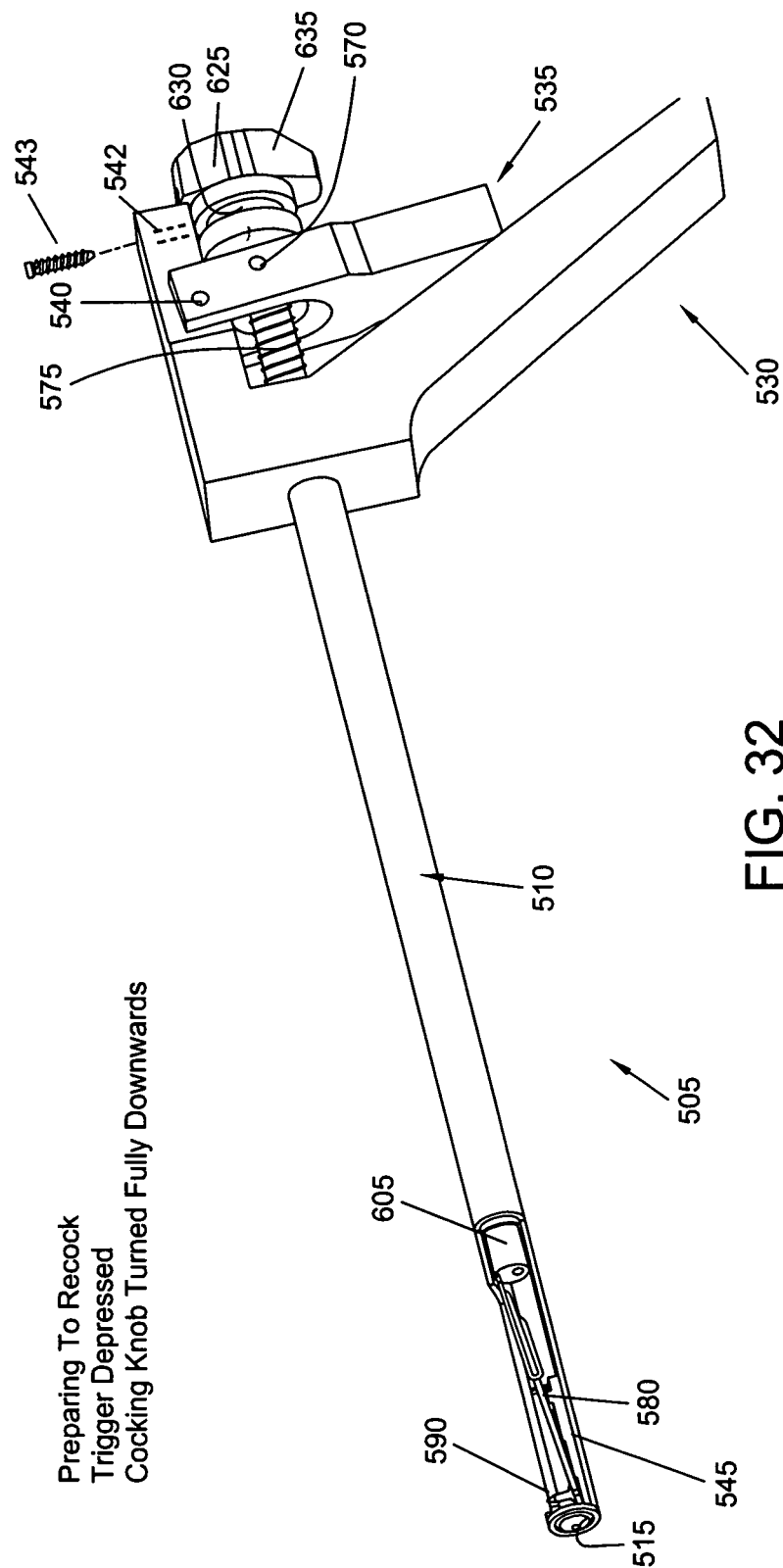


FIG. 31

Preparing To Recock
Trigger Depressed
Cocking Knob Moving Further Downwards



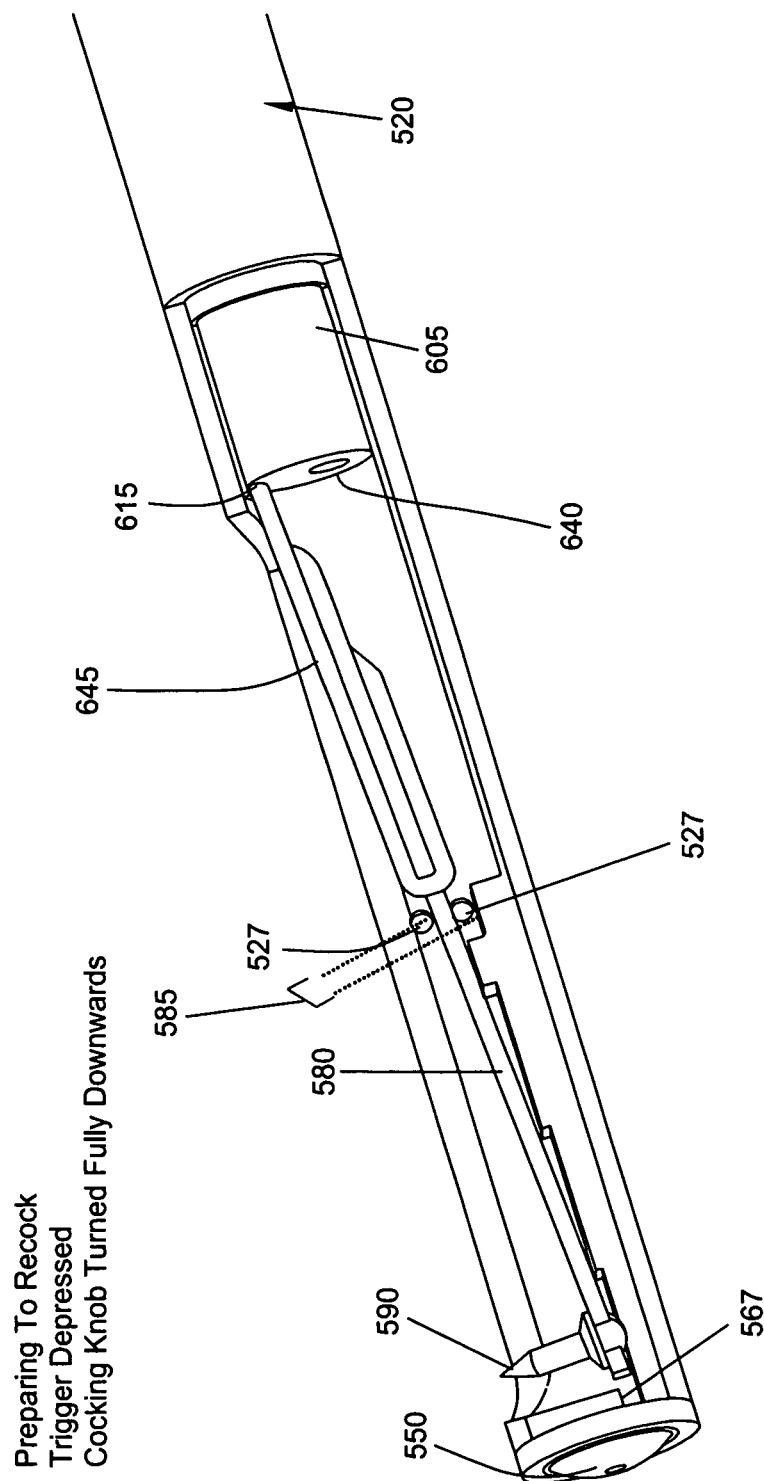
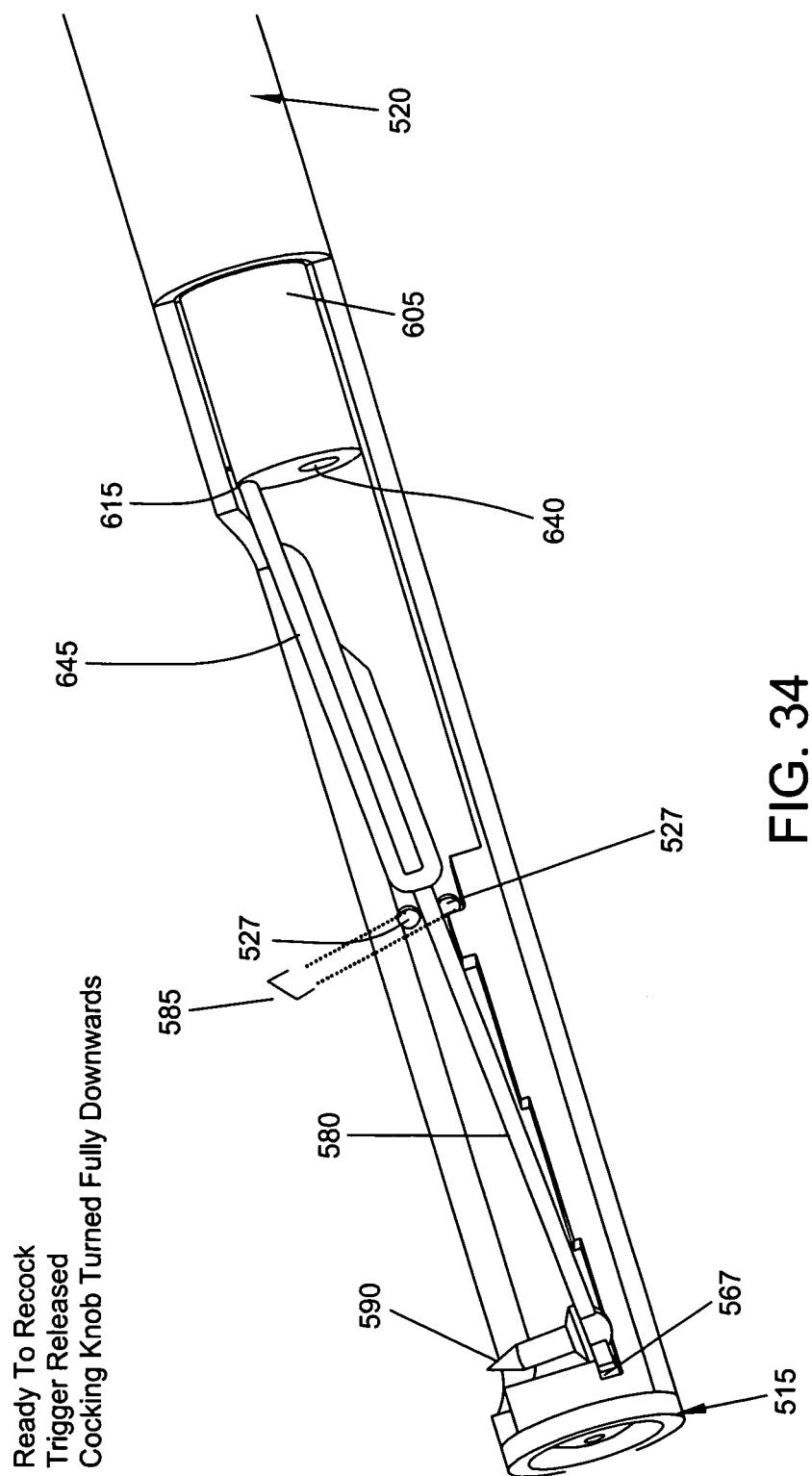


FIG. 33



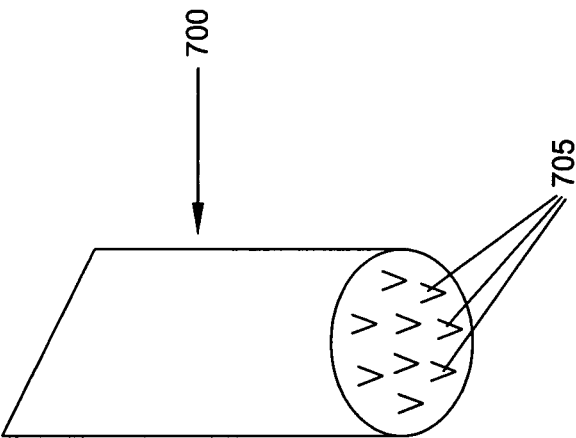


FIG. 35

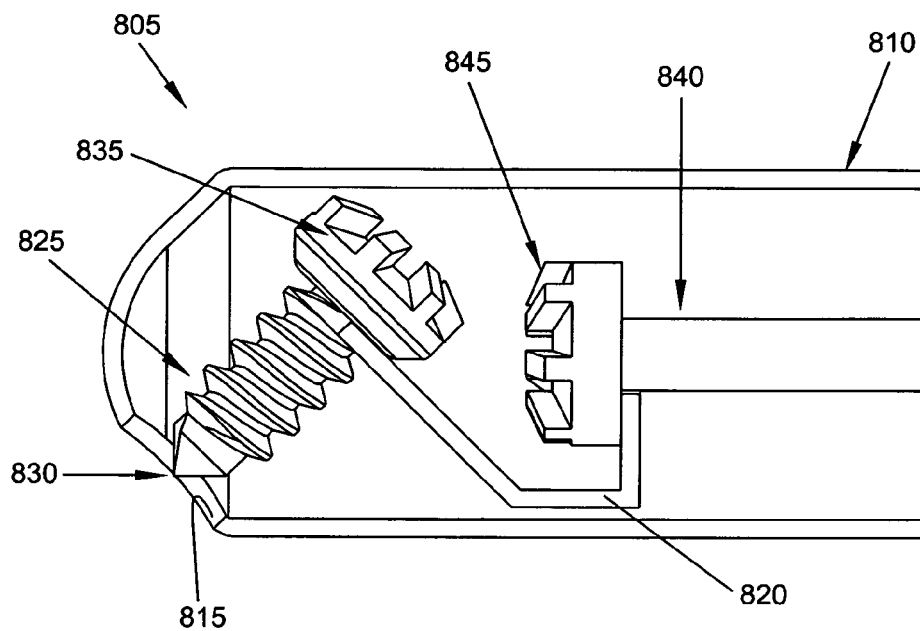


FIG. 36A

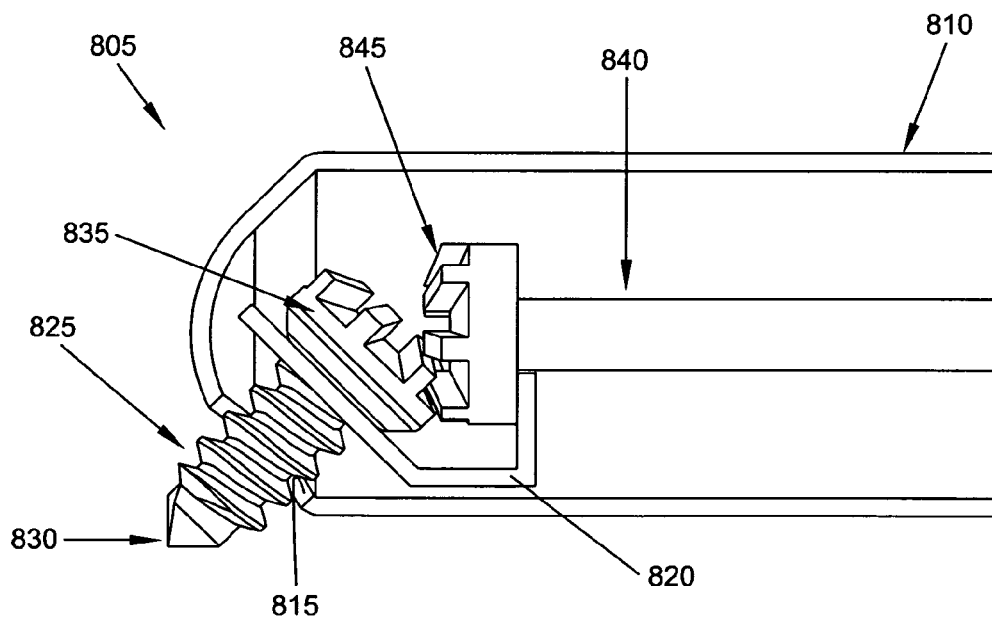


FIG. 36B

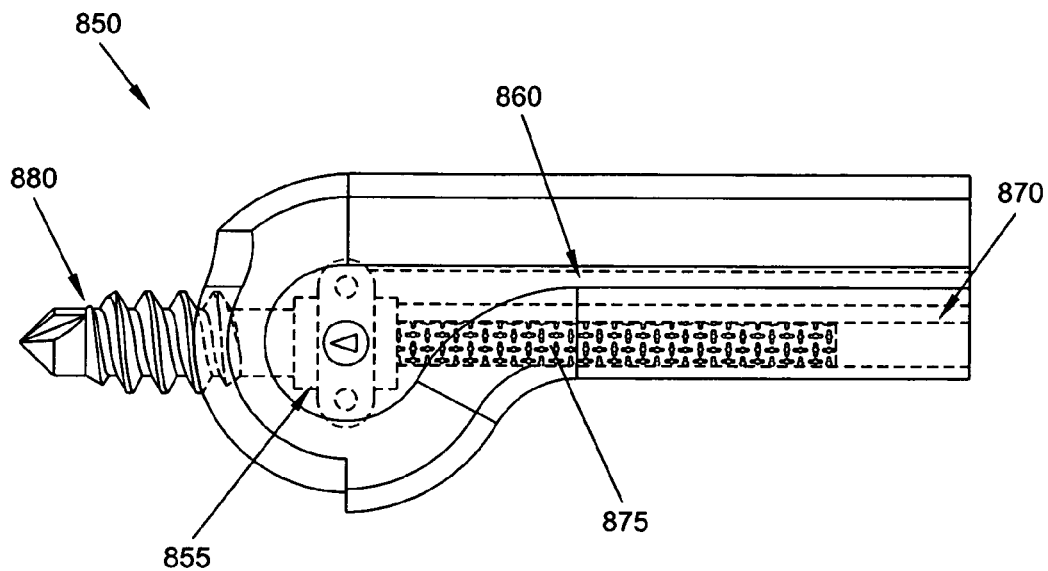


FIG. 37A

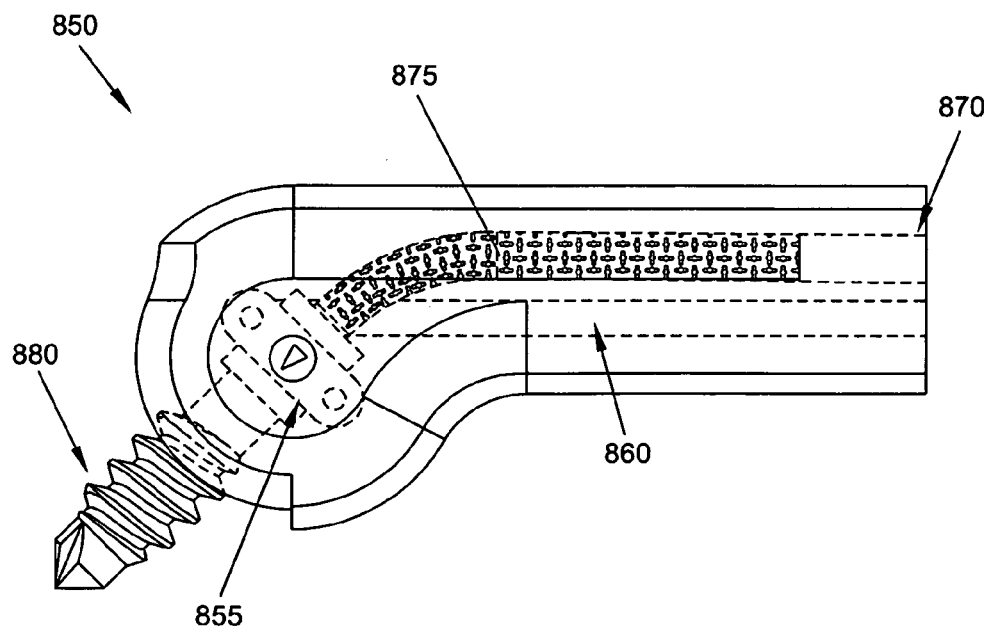


FIG. 37B

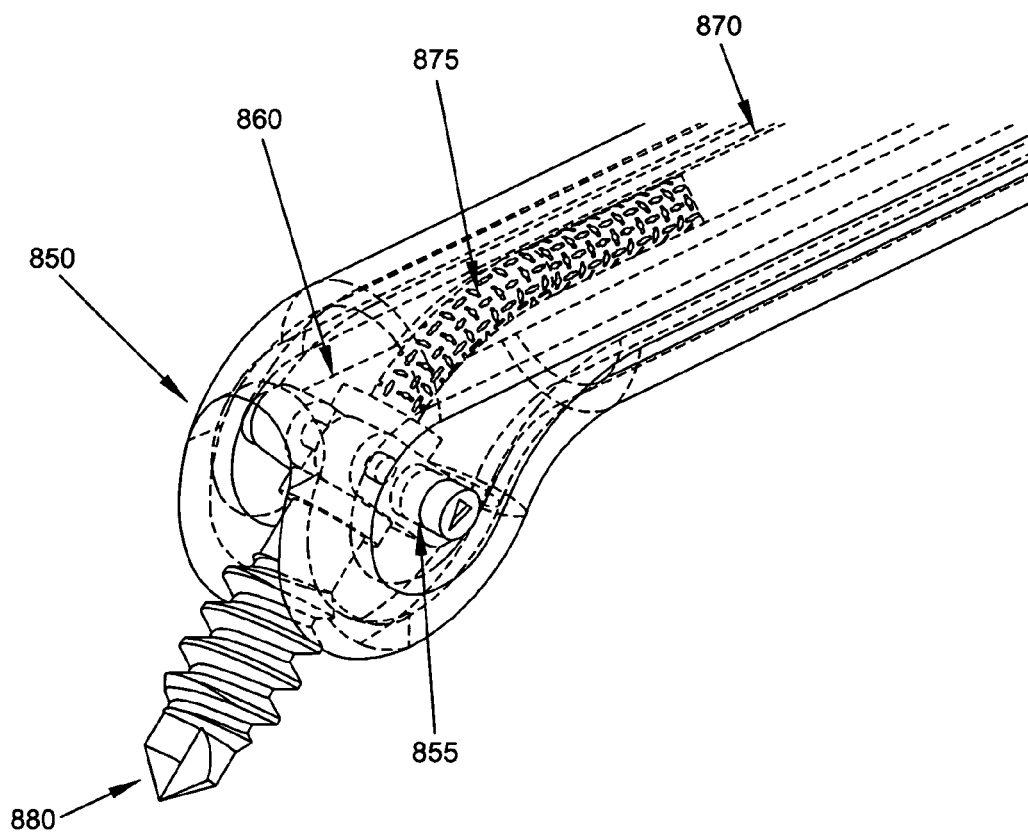


FIG. 38

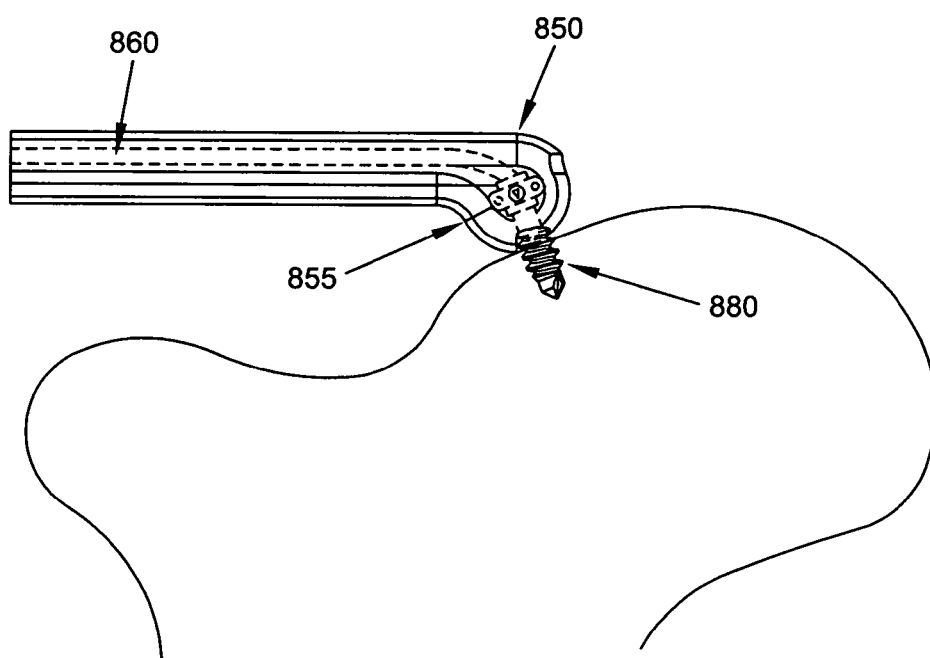


FIG. 39

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METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PERFORMING ARTHROSCOPIC MICROFRACTURE SURGERY

REFERENCE TO PENDING PRIOR PATENT APPLICATIONS

This patent application is a continuation of pending prior U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/437,955, filed May 8, 2009 by Chris Pamichev et al. for METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PERFORMING ARTHROSCOPIC MICROFRACTURE SURGERY, which in turn claims benefit of prior U.S. Provisional patent application Ser. No. 61/126,911, filed May 8, 2008 by Chris Pamichev et al. for METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PERFORMING ARTHROSCOPIC MICROFRACTURE SURGERY.

The above-identified patent applications are hereby incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to methods and apparatus for performing orthopedic surgery in general, and more particularly to methods and apparatus for performing arthroscopic microfracture surgery.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Articular cartilage is a smooth, resilient tissue which covers the opposing ends of bones and facilitates the smooth movement of the bones relative to one another. However, when articular cartilage is damaged (e.g., through injury or prolonged wear), subsequent motion of the bones tends to increase that damage, ultimately causing the cartilage to wear away completely. When this occurs, the bones rub directly against one another, typically resulting in substantial pain for the patient and reduced mobility of the joint. In many cases, such damage to articular cartilage can lead to osteoarthritis.

Microfracture surgery is an orthopedic procedure which can help to restore articular cartilage. More particularly, microfracture surgery creates tiny fractures in the cortical bone bed disposed immediately below the damaged articular cartilage. These fractures permit blood and bone marrow to seep out of the underlying cancellous bone and essentially create blood clots which release cartilage-building cells. These cartilage-building cells then result in the formation of replacement cartilage.

To date, microfracture surgery is typically performed using a small, sharp pick or awl to create the small microfracture holes in the cortical bone. However, such picks or awls are generally used by driving them longitudinally, e.g., with a hammer or mallet, thereby requiring substantially direct linear access to the bone surface which is to receive the microfracture therapy. Furthermore, where the microfracture must be created in a bone surface which is not substantially aligned with the angle of access, it can be difficult to generate the forces required for the pick or awl to penetrate the hard cortical bone and release blood and bone marrow from the underlying cancellous bone.

In many cases, e.g., certain sites on the lower femur, such direct linear access to the microfracture site may be readily available. However, in other cases, intervening anatomical structures may make it difficult or impossible to use a conventional pick or awl to perform the microfracture surgery on the bone. This is particularly true where the microfracture surgery is to be performed arthroscopically.

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By way of example but not limitation, it can be difficult or even impossible to arthroscopically perform microfracture therapy on the acetabular cup of the hip using a conventional pick or awl, given the anatomical constraints typically imposed in arthroscopic hip surgery.

The present invention is intended to provide a novel method and apparatus for performing arthroscopic microfracture surgery, particularly in locations where it is difficult to utilize a conventional pick or awl in the microfracture surgery.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a novel method and apparatus for performing arthroscopic microfracture surgery. The novel apparatus permits the microfracture therapy to be applied to a bone surface even where that bone surface is set at an angle to the axis of approach and/or where it might otherwise be difficult or impossible to use a conventional pick or awl to perform the microfracture surgery.

In one form of the present invention, there is provided a microfracture instrument for applying microfracture therapy to a bone, the microfracture instrument comprising:

an elongated shaft comprising a distal end and a proximal end;

a needle comprising a body terminating in at least one sharp point, the needle being movably mounted to the distal end of the shaft for movement between an extended position for engaging the bone with the at least one sharp point of the needle and a retracted position for withdrawing the at least one sharp point of the needle from the bone; and

a drive shaft movably mounted to the elongated shaft, the drive shaft being connected to the body of the needle so that movement of the drive shaft relative to the elongated shaft moves the needle between its extended position and its retracted position.

In another form of the present invention, there is provided a microfracture instrument for applying microfracture therapy to a bone, the microfracture instrument comprising:

an elongated shaft comprising a distal end and a proximal end;

a needle comprising a body terminating in at least one sharp point, the needle being mounted to the distal end of the shaft; and

a drive shaft movably mounted to the elongated shaft, the drive shaft is adapted to move radially relative to the elongated shaft in order to strike the needle and engage the bone.

In another form of the present invention, there is provided a microfracture instrument for applying microfracture therapy to a bone, the microfracture instrument comprising:

an elongated shaft comprising a distal end and a proximal end;

a needle comprising a body terminating in at least one sharp point, the needle being mounted to the distal end of the shaft; and

a drive shaft movably mounted to the elongated shaft, the drive shaft is adapted to move rotationally relative to the elongated shaft in order to rotate the needle to engage the bone.

In another form of the present invention, there is provided a method for applying microfracture therapy to a bone, the method comprising:

providing a microfracture instrument comprising:

an elongated shaft comprising a distal end and a proximal end;

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a needle comprising a body terminating in at least one sharp point, the needle being movably mounted to the distal end of the shaft for movement between an extended position for engaging the bone with the at least one sharp point of the needle and a retracted position for withdrawing the at least one sharp point of the needle from the bone; and

a drive shaft movably mounted to the elongated shaft, the drive shaft being connected to the body of the needle so that movement of the drive shaft relative to the elongated shaft moves the needle between its extended position and its retracted position;

positioning the elongated shaft adjacent to the bone; and moving the drive shaft so that the sharp point of the needle engages the bone.

In another form of the present invention, there is provided a method for applying microfracture therapy to a bone, the method comprising:

providing a microfracture instrument comprising:

an elongated shaft comprising a distal end and a proximal end;

a needle comprising a body terminating in at least one sharp point, the needle being mounted to the distal end of the shaft; and

a drive shaft movably mounted to the elongated shaft, the drive shaft is adapted to move radially relative to the elongated shaft in order to strike the needle and engage the bone;

positioning the elongated shaft adjacent to the bone; and moving the drive shaft so that the sharp point of the needle engages the bone.

In another form of the present invention, there is provided a method for applying microfracture therapy to a bone, the method comprising:

providing a microfracture instrument comprising:

an elongated shaft comprising a distal end and a proximal end;

a needle comprising a body terminating in at least one sharp point, the needle being mounted to the distal end of the shaft; and

a drive shaft movably mounted to the elongated shaft, the drive shaft is adapted to move rotationally relative to the elongated shaft in order to rotate the needle to engage the bone;

positioning the elongated shaft adjacent to the bone; and moving the drive shaft so that the sharp point of the needle engages the bone.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other objects and features of the present invention will be more fully disclosed or rendered obvious by the following detailed description of the invention, which is to be considered together with the accompanying drawings wherein like numbers refer to like parts, and further wherein:

FIGS. 1-10 are schematic views showing a first microfracture instrument formed in accordance with the present invention;

FIGS. 11-15 are schematic views showing a second microfracture instrument formed in accordance with the present invention;

FIGS. 16-18 are schematic views showing a third microfracture instrument formed in accordance with the present invention;

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FIGS. 19-21 are schematic views showing a fourth microfracture instrument formed in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 22 is a schematic view showing a fifth microfracture instrument formed in accordance with the present invention;

FIGS. 23-34 are schematic views showing a sixth microfracture instrument formed in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 35 is a schematic view showing a distal end of another form of needle; and

FIGS. 36A, 36B, 37A, 37B, 38 and 39 are schematic views showing a seventh microfracture instrument formed in accordance with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention comprises the provision and use of novel apparatus for performing arthroscopic microfracture surgery. The novel apparatus permits the microfracture therapy to be applied to a bone surface even where that bone surface is set at an angle to the axis of approach and/or where it might otherwise be difficult or impossible to use a conventional pick or awl to perform the microfracture surgery.

More particularly, and looking now at FIGS. 1-5, there is shown a novel microfracture instrument 5 formed in accordance with the present invention.

Microfracture instrument 5 generally comprises a hollow shaft 10 (FIG. 1) having a distal end 15, a proximal end 20, and a lumen 25 (FIG. 3) extending therebetween. Distal end 15 of hollow shaft 10 has an opening 30 (FIG. 3) formed therein. The longitudinal axis 35 of opening 30 is set at an acute angle to the longitudinal axis 40 of hollow shaft 10. Preferably, distal end 15 of hollow shaft 10 also has an opening 45 formed therein. Preferably opening 45 is aligned with opening 30 along longitudinal axis 35. A handle 47 (FIG. 1) is secured to hollow shaft 10 near the proximal end of the shaft.

A shoulder 50 is formed on the inside wall of hollow shaft 10, proximal to openings 30 and 45. A stop 55, having a central opening 60 formed therein, is disposed within lumen 25 so that the stop engages shoulder 50. A spacer tube 65, having a lumen 70 extending therethrough, is disposed within lumen 25 of hollow shaft 10 so as to capture stop 55 against shoulder 50. An end cap 75 (FIG. 5), having a lumen 80 extending therethrough, captures spacer tube 65 within lumen 25.

A drive shaft 85 is movably disposed within hollow shaft 10. More particularly, drive shaft 85 comprises a distal end 90 having a diameter sized to be slidably received within central opening 60 in stop 55, and a proximal end 95 sized to be slidably received within spacer tube 65 and end cap 75. An annular shoulder 100 is disposed intermediate drive shaft 85. Annular shoulder 100 engages stop 55 so as to limit distal movement of drive shaft 85. See FIGS. 3 and 4.

A drive head 105 is disposed on the distal end of drive shaft 85. A bifurcated seat 110 is disposed on the distal end of drive head 105. More particularly, bifurcated seat 110 comprises a pair of spaced arms 115 which are disposed at a right angle to the longitudinal axis 35 of opening 30. A needle 120, terminating in a sharp distal tip 125 and a proximal flanged head 130, is slidably mounted in bifurcated seat 110, with the shank 132 of needle 120 received between spaced arms 115. As a result of this construction, proximal and distal movement of drive shaft 85 along longitudinal axis 40 causes needle 120 to be retracted into, or projected out of, opening 30 of hollow shaft 10 along longitudinal axis

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35. Thus, microfracture instrument **5** can be advanced to a surgical site along longitudinal axis **40**, yet deliver its needle **120** for microfracture therapy along a different longitudinal axis **35**. This is a significant improvement over the prior art.

A spring **135** is disposed between drive head **105** and stop **55**.

In one form of the invention, spring **135** is a tension spring, so that drive shaft **85** is normally biased proximally within hollow shaft **10**, and so that needle **120** normally has its sharp distal point **125** in its retracted position wherein the sharp distal point **125** lies within an axial projection of the outer perimeter of hollow shaft **10**. See FIG. 3. However, the proximal end of drive shaft **85** may be moved distally (e.g., by tapping it with a hammer or mallet) so that needle **120** has its sharp distal point **125** in its projected position wherein the sharp distal point **125** projects beyond an axial projection of the outer perimeter of hollow shaft **10**. See FIG. 4. In this way, needle **120** can be used to score a bone in a microfracture procedure. Thus, with this form of the invention, microfracture instrument **5** may be advanced to the surgical site along longitudinal axis **40** with the sharp distal point of needle **120** safely retracted inboard of the instrument, and then the proximal end of drive shaft **85** struck with a hammer or mallet so as to drive the sharp distal point of needle **120** along longitudinal axis **35** so as to deliver microfracture therapy to a bone.

In another form of the invention, spring **135** is a compression spring, so that drive shaft **85** is normally biased distally within hollow shaft **10**, and so that needle **120** normally has its sharp distal point **125** in its projected position wherein the sharp distal point **125** projects beyond an axial projection of the outer perimeter of hollow shaft **10**. See FIG. 4. However, the proximal end of drive shaft **85** may be moved proximally (e.g., by gripping it manually and pulling it proximally) so that needle **120** has its sharp distal point **125** in its retracted position wherein the sharp distal point **125** lies within an axial projection of the outer perimeter of hollow shaft **10**. See FIG. 3. Thereafter, when a bone is to be scored, the proximal end of drive shaft **85** is released, causing compression spring **125** to drive needle **120** out of the distal end of hollow shaft **10** and into the bone. Alternatively, the proximal end of drive shaft **85** can be released, so that needle **120** projects out of hollow shaft **10** so that the surgeon can position it on the bone, and then the proximal end of the drive shaft **85** struck (e.g., with a hammer or mallet) so as to drive sharp distal point **125** into bone. Thus, with this form of the invention, microfracture instrument **5** may have its drive shaft **85** pulled proximally by hand and then the instrument advanced to the surgical site along longitudinal axis **40** with the sharp distal point of needle **120** safely retracted inboard of the instrument, and then the proximal end of drive shaft **85** may be released (and/or struck with a hammer or mallet) so as to drive the sharp distal point of needle **120** along its longitudinal axis **35** so as to deliver microfracture therapy to a bone.

As seen in FIGS. 1-4 and 6-9, hollow shaft **10** can be formed with a modular construction so that different distal tip configurations can be accommodated. More particularly, in this form of the invention, hollow shaft **10** can comprise a distal segment **140** which selectively attaches to a proximal segment **145**. Distal segment **140** can have its openings **30** and **45** set at various angles relative to the longitudinal axis of hollow shaft **10** so as to accommodate a range of surgical applications. In other words, longitudinal axis **35** of openings **30** and **45** can be set at various angles (e.g., 30°, 60°, etc.) to the longitudinal axis **40** of hollow shaft **10**. In some embodiments, the angle is greater than 90°, as shown

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in FIG. 9. In this situation, the drive shaft may be pulled in the proximal direction to drive the needle into the bone. The proximal portion of the device is the same, except that it is configured to drive the needle in a retrograde fashion, and the reusable portion is designed for the desired retrograde angle. Furthermore, if desired, distal segment **140** can be made disposable and proximal segment **145** can be made reusable.

Looking next at FIGS. 10-15, there is shown another novel microfracture instrument **150** formed in accordance with the present invention. Microfracture instrument **150** is similar to the novel microfracture instrument **5** discussed above, except as will hereinafter be discussed in further detail. More particularly, novel microfracture instrument **150** generally comprises a hollow shaft **155** (FIG. 11) having a distal end **160**, a proximal end **165**, and a lumen **170** extending therebetween. Distal end **160** of hollow shaft **155** has an opening **175** formed therein. The longitudinal axis **180** of opening **175** is set at an acute angle to the longitudinal axis **185** of hollow shaft **170**. Preferably, distal end **165** of hollow shaft **155** also has an opening **190** formed therein. Preferably opening **190** is aligned with opening **175** along longitudinal axis **180**.

A drive shaft **195** is movably disposed within hollow shaft **155**. Drive shaft **195** comprises a distal end **200** having a diameter sized to be secured to a drive head **205**, and a proximal end **210** sized to be slidably received within an opening **212** (FIG. 10) formed in an end cap **215**. An annular shoulder **220** (FIG. 11) is disposed intermediate drive shaft **195**.

Drive head **205** is disposed on the distal end of drive shaft **195**. An angled surface **225** is disposed at a right angle to the longitudinal axis **180** of opening **175**. A needle **230**, terminating in a sharp distal tip **235** and a proximal flanged head **240**, is slidably mounted in openings **175** and **190**. A spring **245** (FIG. 12) biases needle **230** in its retracted position, wherein the sharp distal point **235** of needle **230** lies within an axial projection of the outer perimeter of hollow shaft **155**. As a result of this construction, proximal and distal movement of drive shaft **195** along longitudinal axis **185** causes needle **230** to be retracted into, or projected out of, opening **175** of hollow shaft **155** along longitudinal axis **180**. Thus, microfracture instrument **150** can be advanced to a surgical site along longitudinal axis **185**, yet deliver its needle **230** for microfracture therapy along a different longitudinal axis **180**. This is a significant improvement over the prior art.

A slot **250** (FIG. 12) formed in drive head **205** cooperates with a pin **255** set in hollow shaft **155** so as to limit distal and proximal movement of drive shaft **195**. See FIGS. 12 and 15.

A spring **260** is disposed between drive head **205** and shoulder **220**. Spring **260** pushes drive shaft **195** and drive head **205** away from each other, yet allows them to move relative to one another. Spring **260** creates tension between the said parts for the purpose of multiplying the strength of the "tap" coming from drive shaft **195** when applied onto drive head **205**. Components **260**, **195** and **205** move together in direction from proximal end to distal end with each "tap" applied on shaft **210**.

In one form of the invention, spring **260** is a tension spring, so that drive shaft **195** is normally biased proximally within hollow shaft **155**, and so that needle **230** normally has its sharp distal point **235** in its retracted position wherein the sharp distal point **235** lies within an axial projection of the outer perimeter of hollow shaft **155**. See FIG. 11. However, the proximal end of drive shaft **195** may be moved distally (e.g., by tapping it with a hammer or mallet) so that needle

230 has its sharp distal point 235 in its projected position wherein the sharp distal point 235 projects beyond an axial projection of the outer perimeter of hollow shaft 155. See FIG. 15. In this way, needle 230 can be used to score a bone in a microfracture procedure. Thus, with this form of the invention, microfracture instrument 150 may be advanced to the surgical site along longitudinal axis 185 with the sharp distal point of needle 230 safely retracted inboard of the instrument, and then the proximal end of drive shaft 195 struck with a hammer or mallet so as to drive the sharp distal point of needle 230 along its longitudinal axis 180 so as to deliver microfracture therapy to a bone.

In another form of the invention, spring 260 is a compression spring, so that drive shaft 195 is normally biased distally within hollow shaft 155, and so that needle 230 normally has its sharp distal point 235 in its projected position wherein the sharp distal point projects beyond an axial projection of the outer perimeter of hollow shaft 155. See FIG. 15. However, the proximal end of drive shaft 195 may be moved proximally (e.g., by gripping it manually and pulling it proximally) so that needle 230 has its sharp distal point 235 in its retracted position wherein the sharp distal point 235 lies within an axial projection of the outer perimeter of hollow shaft 155. See FIG. 11. Thereafter, when a bone is to be scored, the proximal end of drive shaft 195 is released, causing compression spring 260 to drive needle 230 out of the distal end of hollow shaft 155 and into the bone. Alternatively, the proximal end of drive shaft 195 can be released, so that needle 230 projects out of hollow shaft 155 so that the surgeon can position it on the bone, and then the proximal end of the drive shaft 195 struck (e.g., with a hammer or mallet) so as to drive sharp distal point 235 into bone. Thus, with this form of the invention, microfracture instrument 5 may have its drive shaft 195 pulled proximally by hand and then the instrument advanced to the surgical site along longitudinal axis 185 with the sharp distal point of needle 230 safely retracted inboard of the instrument, and then the proximal end of drive shaft 195 may be released (and/or struck with a hammer or mallet) so as to drive the sharp distal point of needle 230 along its longitudinal axis 180 so as to deliver microfracture therapy to a bone.

Looking next at FIGS. 16-18, there is shown another novel microfracture instrument 300 formed in accordance with the present invention. This construction provides an alternative approach for creating a large amount of potential energy and then suddenly releasing that potential energy to a sharp tip in order to create a small defect in bone for a microfracture procedure.

Microfracture instrument 300 comprises a housing 305 which includes a palm area 310 and a trigger 315. Trigger 315 pivots at a pin 320 and includes a guide pin 325 which rides in a guide rail 330 of a pawl 335. Pawl 335 rotates about a pawl pin 340 so a lock tab 345 rests against a shoulder 350 of a drive shaft 355. Trigger 315 is also attached to a spring 360 at connection 365. Spring 360 is also attached to shaft 355 proximal of shoulder 350. The distal end of drive shaft 355 is configured as a block 370 with a wedge surface 375. Wedge surface 375 is in contact with a needle or punch 380 at a punch wedge surface 385. The punch tip 390 is held in the outer tube 395 of housing 305 by a punch spring 400.

In use, and looking now at FIG. 17, trigger 315 is actuated so that it pivots on pin 320 and guide pin 325 rides along guide rail 330. However, pawl 335 does not move at this time, because the radius of movement of guide pin 325 is the same as the radius of guide rail 330 over this span. Since

trigger 315 is moving, spring 360 begins to compress against shoulder 350. Shoulder 350 does not move because lock tab 345 holds it in place.

In FIG. 18, trigger 315 is actuated a little further such that guide pin 325 starts to run on a steep part of guide rail 330, which forces pawl 335 to rotate about pawl pin 340. This motion lowers lock tab 345 away from shoulder 350, such that shaft 355 is allowed to move distally quickly, based on the potential energy of compressed spring 360. With this action, block 370 and its wedge surface 375 also move distal. Wedge surface 375 slides against punch wedge 385, pushing it against spring 400. As a result, punch 380 (and punch tip 390) shoots out of outer tube 395 and into the adjacent tissue (not shown) so as to apply microfracture therapy to the bone.

When trigger 315 is released, spring 360 is pulled proximally at connection point 365, which pulls shaft 355 and block 370 allowing the punch 380 to drop back in to the outer tube 395 with the help of the punch spring 400.

Looking next at FIGS. 19-21, there is shown another microfracture instrument 400 formed in accordance with the present invention. Microfracture instrument 400 generally comprises an elongated shaft 405 having, at its distal end, a first flexible extension 410 and a second flexible extension 415. First flexible extension 410 comprises a needle 420 having a sharp tip 425 thereon.

As a result of this construction, when second flexible extension 415 is pulled away from first flexible extension 410 (e.g., by pulling on a cable 430) and then released, second flexible extension 415 will drive against first flexible extension 415 so as to drive sharp tip 425 of needle 420 against a bone 435, whereby to provide microfracture therapy.

Looking next at FIG. 22, there is shown another microfracture instrument 440 formed in accordance with the present invention. Microfracture instrument 440 generally comprises an elongated shaft 445. At the distal end of elongated shaft 445 is a needle 450 having a sharp tip 455 thereon. The proximal end of elongated shaft 445 is connected to a powered driver 460. Powered driver 460 is adapted to move shaft 445 so that needle 450 moves towards and away from bone 465. By way of example but not limitation, powered driver 460 may comprise an electrical or pneumatic oscillator. An electrical oscillator, for example, may use an ultrasonic frequency.

As a result of this construction, when needle 450 is positioned against bone 465 and powered driver 460 activated, sharp tip 455 of needle 450 is driven against bone 465, whereby to provide microfracture therapy.

Looking next at FIGS. 23-25, there is shown another novel microfracture instrument 505 formed in accordance with the present invention. Microfracture instrument 505 generally comprises a hollow shaft 510 having a distal end 515, a proximal end 520, and a side window 525 formed adjacent to distal end 515. A pair of holes 527 are formed in hollow shaft 510 adjacent to side window 525. A handle 530 is secured to proximal end 520 of hollow shaft 510. A trigger 535 is pivotally connected to handle 530 via a pivot pin 540. An opening 542 is formed in handle 530 proximal to pivot pin 540, and receives a screw 543 therein, for reasons which will hereinafter be disclosed.

A hollow trigger tube 545 is slidably mounted within hollow shaft 510. Hollow trigger tube 545 comprises a distal end 550, a proximal end 555, and a side opening 560 adjacent to distal end 550. Hollow trigger tube 545 includes a laterally projecting section 565 intermediate its side opening 560. A notch 567 is formed at the distal end of trigger

tube **545**. A pair of screws **570** (only one of which is seen in FIG. **23**) connects the proximal end of hollow trigger tube **545** to trigger **535**. By way of example but not limitation, the top end of trigger **535** may be bifurcated, and each upper leg of the trigger may be connected to hollow trigger tube **545** via one screw **570**. A compression spring **575** is coaxially mounted on the proximal end of hollow trigger tube **545** and is captured between proximal end **520** of hollow shaft **510** and trigger **535**. As a result of this construction, compression spring **575** normally biases hollow trigger tube **545** (and trigger **535**) proximally, however, trigger **535** may be used (e.g., by depressing the trigger) so as to urge hollow trigger tube **545** distally.

Still looking now at FIGS. **23-25**, microfracture instrument **505** also comprises a beam **580**. Beam **580** is disposed within side window **525** of hollow shaft **510** and within side opening **560** of hollow trigger tube **545**. The center portion of beam **580** is secured in place via a U-shaped clip **585** which extends through holes **527** formed in hollow shaft **510**, with one leg of U-shaped clip **585** being disposed above beam **580** and the other leg of U-shaped clip **585** being disposed below beam **580**. A sharp pointed needle **590** projects laterally out of the distal end of beam **580**. An opening **600** is formed in beam **580**, proximal to the point where U-shaped clip **585** engages beam **580**.

A cocking shaft **605** is slidably mounted within hollow trigger tube **545**. Cocking shaft **605** comprises a distal end **610** having a groove **615** formed therein, and a proximal end **620** having a cocking knob **625** secured thereto. Cocking knob **625** includes a peripheral groove **630** and a laterally-projecting finger **635**. Peripheral groove **630** receives the tip of screw **543** therein, whereby to limit longitudinal movement of cocking knob **625**, and hence cocking shaft **605**, relative to handle **530**. Finger **635** acts as a visual indicator to show the current rotational disposition of cocking shaft **605** within hollow trigger tube **545**, as will hereinafter be discussed in further detail.

If desired, an opening **640** may extend through cocking shaft **605** and cocking knob **625**, e.g., so as to permit an endoscope to be advanced through microfracture instrument **505** and facilitate visualization of the surgical site. By passing an endoscope through opening **640** in microfracture instrument **505**, the endoscope and microfracture instrument can both use a single arthroscopic portal. This can be helpful in various situations, e.g., where the anatomy limits the availability (number and placement) of the access portals. Furthermore, by providing an endoscope-receiving opening **640** in the microfracture instrument **505**, the endoscope can be automatically positioned relative to the surgical site simply by positioning of the microfracture instrument relative to the surgical site. This can help reduce the number of "hands" needed to perform the arthroscopic microfracture surgery, and can help ensure that the endoscope is always properly directed at the surgical field.

If desired, the endoscope can be inserted into opening **640** of microfracture instrument **505** in the operating room, e.g., just prior to the commencement of the microfracture procedure or even during the microfracture procedure itself. Alternatively, microfracture instrument **505** could be manufactured so that the endoscope is inserted into opening **640** before the instrument leaves the factory.

A cocking bar (or wire) **645** connects cocking shaft **605** to beam **580**. More particularly, cocking bar **645** comprises a J-shaped element which passes through opening **600** in beam **580** and which is secured in groove **615** of cocking shaft **605**. As a result of this construction, rotation of cocking

shaft **605** (e.g., applied via cocking knob **625**) applies a rotational force to the proximal end of beam **580** via the J-shaped cocking bar **645**.

It should be appreciated that microfracture instrument **505** may be reusable or disposable.

Furthermore, microfracture instrument **505** may be partially disposable. More particularly, if desired, beam **580**, needle **590** and J-shaped cocking bar **645** can be replaced (as a complete subassembly) by simply removing U-shaped clip **585** and installing a replacement sub-assembly (consisting of a new beam **580**, a new needle **590** and a new J-shaped cocking bar **645**). This approach allows the majority of microfracture instrument **505** to be re-used while still permitting a new subassembly (i.e., a new beam **580**, a new needle **590** and a new J-shaped cocking bar **645**) to be supplied for each procedure.

Furthermore, the ability to replace beam **580**, a needle **590** and a J-shaped cocking bar **645** also permits the microfracture instrument **505** to be quickly modified for different applications, e.g., where harder bone is to be penetrated, a beam **580** having a greater spring factor can be employed. Hollow shaft **510** may have two or more sets of holes **527**, thereby allowing U-shaped clip **585** to be inserted in multiple positions. This changes the ratio of the length of beam **580** in front of U-shaped clip **585** to the length of beam **580** behind U-shaped clip **585**. The result is a change in total travel of needle **590** and the resulting force it applies on the bone.

Novel microfracture instrument **505** permits microfracture therapy to be arthroscopically applied to a bone surface, even where that bone surface is set at an angle to the axis of approach and/or where it might otherwise be difficult or impossible to use a conventional pick or awl to perform the microfracture surgery.

The use of microfracture instrument **505** typically starts with the instrument in its "at rest" condition, i.e., with the distal end of beam **580** set in notch **567** of hollow trigger tube **545**, trigger **535** released, and cocking knob **625** set so that its finger **635** points down and groove **615** of cocking shaft **605** points upward. See FIGS. **23** and **24**.

Next, cocking knob **625** is rotated. This in turn causes cocking shaft **605** to be rotated. Cocking knob **625** is rotated to the point where its finger **635** points upward and groove **615** of cocking shaft **605** faces downward. As this occurs, the proximal end of cocking bar **645** (which is disposed in groove **615** of cocking shaft **605**) is also rotated, which applies a torsional force to the proximal end of beam **580**, thereby flexing beam **580**. See FIGS. **26** and **27**.

It should be appreciated that, due to the nature and configuration of beam **580**, and due to the manner in which beam **580** is simultaneously supported (i) in its midsection (via engagement with U-shaped clip **585**), (ii) at its distal end (via engagement with notch **567**), and (iii) at its proximal end (via J-shaped cocking bar **645** which extends between beam opening **600** and cocking shaft groove **615**), the microfracture instrument **505** will be in a stable condition when cocking shaft **605** is disposed so that groove **615** is oriented fully up (FIGS. **23** and **24**) or fully down (FIG. **27**).

Thus, when cocking knob **625** is rotated to the point where its finger **635** points upward and groove **615** of

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cocking shaft **605** faces downward, the microfracture instrument will be in a stable condition, with its beam **580** flexed so as to store potential energy in beam **580**.

At this point, the device is cocked.

Microfracture instrument **505** is then manipulated so that its sharp pointed needle **590** is disposed opposite the site of the desired microfracture therapy.

When microfracture instrument **505** is in proper position, trigger **535** is depressed so that hollow trigger tube **545** moves distally. This action releases the distal end of beam **580** from notch **567**, thereby permitting flexed beam **580** to straighten, which causes the distal end of beam **580** to be driven laterally. As the distal end of beam **580** is driven laterally, sharp pointed needle **590** is driven laterally out of instrument **505** and into the adjacent bone, whereby to create a desired microfracture. See FIG. **28**.

Then trigger **535** may be released. See FIG. **29**.

When it is desired to form another microfracture, instrument **505** must first be restored to its "at rest" condition, then re-cocked, and finally re-fired.

The instrument is restored to its "at rest" condition by first re-depressing trigger **535**. See FIG. **30**. Then cocking knob **625** is rotated so that its finger **635** is restored to its downward position and groove **615** of cocking shaft **605** once again faces upward. This causes beam **580** to return to its original condition where the distal end of the beam is lowered and the proximal end of the beam is raised. See FIGS. **30-32**. Then trigger **535** is released, so that hollow trigger tube **545** moves proximally and the distal end of beam **580** is re-captured within notch **567**. At this point the instrument has fully returned to its "at rest" condition shown in FIGS. **23** and **24**.

The microfracture instrument may then be re-cocked, and thereafter fired, according to the foregoing sequence.

Thus it will be seen that the microfracture instrument of the present invention comprises an apparatus which provides the ability to store, and remotely release, controlled amounts of captured kinetic energy. The precise amount of energy stored and subsequently released can be regulated by the particular construction of beam **580** (e.g., the choice of materials used, the configuration of the beam, the dimensions of the beam, etc.). Furthermore, the amount of energy stored and released could be regulated by utilizing an alternative form of cocking mechanism, e.g., one which permits the user to determine the precise amount of beam deflection used to drive needle **590** (such as a ratchet mechanism). It will be appreciated that the approach used by the present invention is fundamentally different from the "hammer hit" pick or awl of current microfracture techniques, since the present invention permits a controlled amount of energy to be stored and remotely released.

If desired, the distal end of microfracture instrument **505** may be formed with a flexible configuration. Such a construction can permit microfracture instrument **505** to better conform to the particulars of a treatment site or to extend the reach of the instrument without the need to fully distract a joint.

Furthermore, the distal end of shaft **510** can be provided with a locator needle extending laterally of the microfracture instrument **505**. This locator needle can be placed in a previously-placed fracture hole so as to set the location of a subsequent fracture hole. This arrangement can be used so as to ensure a known spacing between various fracture holes.

Additionally, beam **580** can be provided with more than one needle, thus allowing for the placement of multiple fracture holes with one "firing" of the instrument. Where

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more than one needle **590** is provided, the multiple needles can be arranged in various configurations, e.g., linear, crossed, etc.

If desired, beam **580** can be formed with a slight recess on its underside so as to form a natural seat for J-shaped cocking bar **645** when the microfracture instrument is placed in its cocked position (FIG. **27**). This construction has the advantage that it can provide tactile feedback to the user when the J-shaped cocking bar **645** seats in the recess, thereby confirming for the user that the microfracture instrument has been placed in its cocked state.

If desired, the needle of the microfracture instrument may be adapted to deliver a therapeutic agent which induces cartilage growth.

Furthermore, it should also be appreciated that the needle of the microfracture instrument may be configured to provide a plurality of sharp points. Thus, for example, in FIG. **35**, there is shown a needle **700** comprising a plurality of sharp points **705** for applying microfracture therapy to a bone. This configuration can be advantageous where it is desired to apply a plurality of microfractures with a single impact.

Looking next at FIGS. **36A** and **36B**, there is shown another novel microfracture instrument **805** also formed in accordance with the present invention. Microfracture instrument **805** is intended to penetrate a bone with a drilling action rather than with an impact action as is the case with the microfracture instruments disclosed above.

To this end, microfracture instrument **805** generally comprises an elongated shaft **810** having an opening **815** formed in its distal end. A bracket **820** is disposed within elongated shaft **810** adjacent to opening **815**. Bracket **820** serves to rotatably support a drill element **825** extending through opening **815**. Drill element **825** in turn comprises a drill tip **830** and a geared head **835**. Geared head **835** is driven by a drive shaft **840**. More particularly, drive shaft **840** has a geared distal end **845** for engaging the geared head **835** of drill element **825**.

On account of the foregoing construction, elongated shaft **810** can be used to advance microfracture instrument **805** so that its drill element **825** is located adjacent to the bone site which is to be microfractured, and then drive shaft **840** can be rotated so as to turn drill element **825** into the bone, whereby to create the desired microfracture. This process can be repeated as many times as desired until the desired degree of microfracture has been achieved.

FIGS. **37A**, **37B**, **38** and **39** show a related construction. More particularly, with the construction shown in FIGS. **36A** and **36B**, drill element **825** extends at a fixed angle relative to the longitudinal axis of elongated shaft **810**. The construction shown in FIGS. **37A**, **37B**, **38** and **39** allows the angle of the drill element to be adjusted relative to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft.

More particularly, in FIGS. **37A**, **37B**, **38** and **39** there is shown a microfracture instrument **850** which has a mount **855** pivotally disposed at its distal end. Mount **855** is pivoted by pushing or pulling on one or more control rods or lines **860** so as to adjust the angular position of mount **855** relative to the longitudinal axis of the microfracture instrument. Microfracture instrument **850** also comprises a drive shaft **870** which has a flexible distal end **875** extending through mount **855**, such that adjustment of the angular position of mount **855** results in adjustment of the angular position of flexible distal end **875** of drive shaft **870**. Flexible distal end **875** of drive shaft **870** supports a drill element **880**.

On account of the foregoing construction, the elongated shaft of microfracture instrument **850** can be used to position

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drill element **880** adjacent to the bone site which is to be microfractured, mount **855** can be moved (via one or more control rods or lines **860**) so as to direct the drill element toward the bone surface, and then drive shaft **870** can be rotated so as to turn drill element **880** into the bone, whereby to created the desired microfracture. Again, this process can be repeated as many times as desired until the desired degree of microfracture has been achieved.

MODIFICATIONS

It will be understood that many changes in the details, materials, steps and arrangements of elements, which have been herein described and illustrated in order to explain the nature of the invention, may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A microfracture instrument for applying microfracture therapy to a bone, the microfracture instrument comprising:
 - an elongated shaft comprising a distal end and a proximal end and having a longitudinal axis extending from the distal end to the proximal end;
 - a mount comprising an opening having a longitudinal axis extending therethrough, wherein the mount is pivotally disposed at the distal end of the elongated shaft, the mount being configured to pivot relative to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft; and
 - a drive shaft rotatably mounted to the elongated shaft, the drive shaft comprising a flexible distal end, the flexible distal end extending through the opening in the mount and supporting a drill element thereon, wherein the drill element comprises a sharp distal tip, a body and a longitudinal axis extending between the sharp distal tip and the body;
 wherein pivotally adjusting the mount relative to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft results in movement of the flexible distal end of the drive shaft and the drill element supported thereon so as to direct the drill element at a selected angle relative to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft, wherein the longitudinal

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axis of the opening of the mount is aligned with the longitudinal axis of the drill element;
 wherein rotational movement of the drive shaft is configured to move the drill element into the bone.

2. The microfracture instrument according to claim 1 further comprising at least one control rod for pivoting the mount.

3. The microfracture instrument according to claim 1 wherein the drill element comprises screw threads.

4. A microfracture instrument for applying microfracture therapy to a bone, the microfracture instrument comprising:
 - an elongated shaft comprising a distal end and a proximal end;

a needle comprising a body terminating in at least one sharp point, the needle being movably mounted to the distal end of the elongated shaft for movement between an extended position for engaging the bone with the at least one sharp point of the needle and a retracted position for withdrawing the at least one sharp point of the needle from the bone; and

a drive shaft movably mounted to the elongated shaft, the drive shaft being connected to the body of the needle so that movement of the drive shaft relative to the elongated shaft moves the needle between its extended position and its retracted position;

wherein the elongated shaft comprises a longitudinal axis extending between its distal end and its proximal end, wherein the needle comprises a longitudinal axis extending between its at least one sharp point and its body, and further wherein the longitudinal axis of the needle is disposed at an angle to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft;

wherein the drive shaft is adapted to move rotationally relative to the elongated shaft in order to move the needle between its extended position and its retracted position;

wherein the drive shaft comprises a first gear member, and wherein the body of the needle comprises a second gear member for engaging the first gear member, whereby rotation of the drive shaft causes rotation of the needle.

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